The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXVII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1933 No. 3560

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States; to Canada, $5.50; and to other foreign countries, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City. Cable Address: NATION, New York. Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager. British Agent, Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London W. C. 1, England.

THE COAL CODE, product of actual blood and sweat in the coal fields of Pennsylvania and in the conference rooms of Washington, is the typical product of compromise. In other words, it is, upon the whole, a "fair" code—and it satisfies neither side. It subjects an anarchist industry to checks and regulations which seem outrageous to the lords of misrule who own the industry. It sets hours and fixes wages which fail to satisfy the workers; and it establishes boards to administer the code on which labor is not represented. On the other hand, price-cutting and many other destructive practices are specifically held to be violations of the code; and labor is not only guaranteed the right to organize and bargain collectively but is included on equal terms in the boards set up to deal with labor relations. It is difficult to believe that so controversial a treaty will become effective without further struggle. For the coal code seems to be an epitome of all the sources of conflict in American industry—labor against capital, union against union, one geographical section against another, company against company, and finally the industry itself against the government. We admire the pertinacity and patience of General Johnson and the President in sticking to their avowed aims in the face of resistance which almost amounted to mutiny; but we believe that the task of taming our industrial autocrats has only begun.

PRESSURE FROM LABOR, the consumers, and the small producers may soon compel the Roosevelt Administration to go to the limit in using the tremendous power given to the President by the various recovery laws. Until now the White House and the NRA have been inclined to follow a middle-of-the-road policy. They have preferred to let contending factions within an industry settle their own disputes, Mr. Roosevelt and General Johnson laying down the law only when, as in the case of the coal operators, it has appeared impossible to reach an agreement without direct intervention. This method seemed to be working satisfactorily for a while, but in recent weeks there has been an increasing volume of protest from three directions. Leaders of organized labor now recognize that, despite the gains of the workers, the NRA is destined to fall far short of its goal. William Green fears that from seven to eight million persons will still be unemployed this winter, which is a moderate estimate. The true figure, if the present trend does not change, is likely to be well over ten million. Mr. Green said recently that organized labor could not "guarantee the stability" of the working class if drastic measures were not soon taken by the government to tighten the labor provisions of the codes covering the bigger industries and to insure a shorter working week. He argued in favor of a thirty-hour week in place of the thirty-five- and forty-hour weeks being granted. A great wave of strikes appears to be in the offing. Such unrest is bound to react upon the general public, increasing the pressure for more vigorous use of the unprecedented power reposed in the President.

THE SMALL PRODUCERS are also growing restive. Dissatisfied elements in the cotton-textile industry have persuaded the NRA to call new hearings with a view to changing the code for that group. Similar reports of unrest come from other industries. Hearings held by the NRA on the electrical-equipment code and by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration on the proposed live-stock marketing agreement clearly reveal the high-handed manner in which the large producers dominate their respective industries. It was testified by witness after witness that the electrical-equipment code was drawn up by the "industry," meaning primarily the General Electric-Westinghouse group, without even consulting numerous small manufacturers. In the same way many representatives of cattle raisers, farmers, and live-stock dealers appeared at the A. A. A. hearing to testify that the marketing agreement proposed for the meat-packing industry was exclusively the product of the big meat-packing houses. The agreement, these witnesses said, would give the big packing companies complete control of the industry, even to the extent of fixing prices to the producer. Lastly come the consumers, who have had to bear the burden of the general price rise and who have had difficulty in making their complaints heard because they are unorganized and weakly represented in Washington. If the comments flowing into the NRA headquarters in New York City are typical, the consumers throughout the country are about to demand that Mr. Roosevelt come to their assistance

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by resort to dictatorial authority. As one person put it: "Roosevelt must be dictator. The masses will be with him, and he will win."

OUR AMBASSADOR IN CUBA, Sumner Welles, committed a curious and needless slip in denying publicly, on the day after the establishment of the present regime, that the United States would recognize the present de facto President. Since then the Department of State has pursued the fantastic and paradoxical policy of (a) going along on Mr. Welles's assumption that the United States has not yet recognized the Grau San Martin administration, (b) declaring officially through Secretary Hull that it wanted only to assure itself that the regime was strong enough to endure, and (c) assuring the Cuban administration through Mr. Welles of our complete sympathy and friendliness. This is muddling with a vengeance. Whether Mr. Welles was piqued at the coup d'etat which overthrew the Cespedes government, in the establishment of which he played so important a part and which we had recognized automatically, or whether he considered it evidence of poor judgment to recognize a government which he was convinced from day to day could not last another twenty-four hours, is not yet clear. Any Cuban de facto government should be recognized as a matter of common sense and sound policy, both to secure the declared objective of a "stable" government and in order not to negative by our action our avowed purpose of not dictating to the Cubans whom they should select. Otherwise we shall either be committed to the awkward and destructive policy of watching each succeeding administration with tutelary solicitude for a period of days to see whether it can, like the Spartan infant exposed on the mountain top, survive the period of trial, or we must reverse ourselves by hastily recognizing the next administration as soon as it takes office. The Roosevelt Administration's intentions in Cuba are excellent, but its acts have obscured and hindered the execution of its purpose.

THE LOAN of from $50,000,000 to $75,000,000 which the R. F. C. contemplates making to Russia raises certain questions which ought to be answered by the Administration, at least in its own mind, before the loan is made. It is an absurdity for our government to lend millions of dollars to a foreign government which it still refuses to recognize. It is true that we committed that absurdity in the $4,000,000 loan made in July, but that is no reason why we should repeat it. By every rule of logic and consistency, recognition should precede lending. Another important question involves our future willingness to accept repayment of the loan. By this time, at least, we ought to have recognized the enormous importance of the problem of transfer; we ought to have learned that we can take payment on our loans only if we are willing to accept an excess of imports. In the post-war period our total imports from Russia have never in any year exceeded $25,000,000, or from half to one-third of the proposed new loan; and these imports have been overwhelmingly offset by our exports to Russia, which have ranged from three to five times the imports annually. Russia's ability to repay a loan from us will not depend, of course, merely upon direct trade between the two countries—for in that case it would be hopeless ever to expect repayment—but upon Russia's total balance of trade with the outside world, and the monetary settlement could be made through triangular exchange operations. But in order to let Russia repay us we must not only not be hysterical, as we were a year or two ago, when Russia again begins to sell us lumber and sausage casings, but we must admit more goods from other countries. This means in turn that we must lower our tariffs.

IF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT really succeeds in eliminating fifty army posts, as he has just told the War Department that he will do, it will be something of a triumph. There are now no fewer than sixty unused barracks and posts, and for decades past efforts have been made to close some of them and sell them. Every time this has been attempted, Congressmen, chambers of commerce, merchants' associations, and interested persons generally have swooped down upon the War Department and prevented action. The army, too, has wished to hold on to most of these posts for use in an emergency. But the World War showed that if we go to war again, such small housing units will be of no avail at all. There will have to be huge cantonments with extensive drill grounds. If anybody can ever put this reform through, Mr. Roosevelt ought to be able to do it. His enormous prestige and popularity should make it easy for him to tell protesting Congressmen that the welfare of the army and the country as a whole rises far above local graft or interest. That the army will benefit is indubitable; its strength is frittered away by stationing small detachments at many places. Moreover, the President has offered it a large sop by promising the expenditure of $50,000,000 for housing in the fifty camps and posts which will survive—$50,000,000 too much, in our view.

THE Tennessee Valley Authority has announced the domestic rates which will be available to consumers who buy current from Muscle Shoals. For the first fifty kilowatt hours the rate will be 3 cents; for subsequent blocks, 2 cents, 1 cent, and 4 mills. For small users, those whose appliances, besides lights, include an iron, a toaster, a vacuum cleaner, it is estimated that the rate will be about $1.50 monthly. This contrasts with a domestic rate of $4.57 in adjacent Knoxville and $4.50 in New York City. For general users, who perhaps possess a refrigerator or a washing-machine, the 200-kilowatt charge for Muscle Shoals power will be $4.50 monthly as against $9.06 in Knoxville and $10.85 in New York. Householders whose homes are fully equipped electrically will actually pay a one-cent rate for a large part of this service. Farmers' rates will be approximately as low. The rates are expected to cover not merely the cost of operation and maintenance, but depreciation and taxes as well. Here is the direct and effective answer to the extortion which the American consumer has been enduring from the privately owned utilities. Small wonder that these have bitterly fought public ownership and that their stocks were "off" in the market quotations the day after the announcement. The New York *Times* editorially views the new program at Muscle Shoals as a means "to beat into submission an industry which seems to have been singled out as an exception to the current theories of fair competition." To chide the Administration for ignoring the principles of fair competition in dealing with an industry which has never had to suffer competition of any kind, and has reciprocated for

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this privilege with unconscionable profiteering, impresses us as highly amusing.

THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, designed to bring more hope of peace to the world, reassembles at Geneva in an atmosphere of greater hostility, fear, and uncertainty than has existed since the Treaty of Versailles was signed nearly fifteen turgid years ago. That document, of course, is the chief reason for the present situation, and although there is no use in crying over spilt milk, one cannot but recur to the tragedy of the terms laid down at Versailles at this moment. For when at long last the Allies had reached a point where they would have been willing to relinquish some of the most revolting requirements, Germany—exacerbated by a too long humiliation—produced Hitlerism and made concessions almost impossible. Germany is sending a highly aggressive delegation to Geneva, and probably is seeking an excuse to walk out and thereafter thumb her nose at those who forced the crushing treaty upon her. Yet there is one germ of agreement in the recent declarations of Baron von Neurath, the Reich's Foreign Minister, in spite of the generally truculent tone of his remarks. He said that Germany would not accept disarmament control unless it were an international agreement applying to all nations. Why should it not be that? There is strong support for such action in France, and it is hard to see why any nation which is honest in its professed willingness to disarm should object to international supervision of its actions in that regard.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Spain is now meeting its first real test. It must defeat the plans of the newly installed Lerroux Cabinet to "modify" the revolutionary gains which the Socialists have thus far compelled the moderate republicans to accept. Indeed, unless it checks the new government, the party may find itself following the path of the British Laborites and German Social Democrats, a path that can lead only to abandonment of Socialist principles and ignominious surrender to the forces of reaction or fascism. It is not enough to say that the Socialist Party has the support of the trade unions with their million members, who will be called out on strike if the Lerroux Government attempts to divert the revolution into reactionary channels. The German Social Democratic Party likewise had its roots in a powerful trade-union movement, the most powerful in the world, but this did not prevent the rise of fascism. The British Labor Party has a similar foundation, and yet was not strong enough to save England from a "national" government. Mass strength is important, but not more so than clarity of purpose and devotion to principle. The Lerroux Cabinet will doubtless begin by seeking a compromise with the Holy See on the church and school questions. In short, it will begin by giving the republic's chief enemy a new lease on life. We should not be misled by Premier Lerroux's republicanism. The struggle is no longer between republic and monarchy. The struggle today lies between the masses of the population and the church, the landowners, and the relatively few but politically powerful industrialists. These conservative groups prefer a republic to the late monarchy, for they feel that they can control such a government more easily than they could the corrupt court of King Alfonso.

THE FASCIST MOVEMENT in the Irish Free State has taken a somewhat individual turn, but its goal differs in no essential respect from the objective of fascism in other countries. The state is to be glorified, the individual submerged. When he joined the movement, William T. Cosgrave, former President, called for "a unification of forces." "This is no time," he said, "for divided counsels or divided efforts"—which is precisely the language that was used by Chancellor Dollfuss two days later in announcing his authoritarian state, by Minister of Propaganda Goebbels in Germany when the Nazis came into power last winter and began to abolish other parties one by one, and by Mussolini when, after several years of cautious maneuvering, he finally succeeded in setting up an all-fascist parliament. The Irish movement seems likely to follow the German rather than the Italian pattern. It is built about the dynamic personality of General Eoin O'Duffy, former commander of the Irish Civic Guard and now leader of the Blue Shirts. His program calls for the elimination of all political parties, "reform" of the parliamentary system, and "coordination" of the country on semi-military lines. Dispatches from Dublin say that his followers are well armed and organized into military units, but lack the support of a majority of the population. This would suggest that General O'Duffy may attempt to seize power instead of waiting to come into office by constitutional methods as did Hitler in Germany. However, now that the Farmers' Party and Cosgrave's Nationalist Party have joined forces with the Blue Shirts, it may not be necessary for General O'Duffy to risk an insurrection. Whatever method he may choose, he may soon have his opportunity, for President De Valera, the only public man of consequence now opposed to General O'Duffy, appears to be losing ground rapidly in his efforts to overcome the deeping economic crisis in the Free State.

EASY ASSERTIONS are made on all sides of the educational value of radio, but such stations as are actually conducted for educational purposes are finding it hard to survive against the opposition of the program makers whose standards of education are set by manufacturers of tooth pastes, Virginia hams, and oil heaters. Thus after an expensive and time-consuming fight, Station WCAJ of the Nebraska Wesleyan University has surrendered and sold out to the commercial station which badgered it off the air. WCAJ was one of the pioneer radio stations of the country, having begun broadcasting in 1920. Shortly after the Federal Radio Commission was organized in 1927, WCAJ was put on the same frequency as WOW in Tulsa, Oklahoma, without division of time. Two months of heterodyning followed, and then a better arrangement was decreed whereby WCAJ received a seventh of the time. Unwilling to concede it even this, WOW early in 1930 demanded all the time. The Radio Commission set a hearing, and WCAJ officials were put to the expense of going to Washington to defend their station. Later a federal examiner reported in favor of WOW's application. More expense was incurred by Nebraska Wesleyan University in filing exceptions, and in 1931 the Radio Commission reversed its examiner. WOW was not satisfied. It went to the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia—and again it lost. Now at last one might have thought that WCAJ would have been left alone with its little one-seventh of the time for an educational

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program, but the subterfuges of the law had not yet been exhausted, nor had the rapacity of WOW. Last May the latter again applied to the Radio Commission for full time. Whereupon the university felt that it could not stand the expense of further fighting and abandoned radio education to the makers of tooth pastes, Virginia hams, and oil heaters.

WE WERE IMPRESSED by the parade of 250,000 New Yorkers who turned out in honor of the NRA, but we wish we knew just what it was that impressed us and, especially, whether or not it ought to have done so. The marchers looked happy and they certainly looked, besides, so pleasantly unmilitary that it was hard to see any threat of fascism in their holiday demonstration. Bands played, banners waved, and whole detachments of youth pranced gaily along without exhibiting in their gait or expression the slightest sign of realizing that their future looks dark to most outside observers. Whether or not the bread is going to hold out we have no way of knowing. On September 14, however, the government provided them with at least one circus.

THE New York *Evening Post,* the oldest daily in the metropolis, has again changed its size, becoming a five-column paper—not a tabloid, it explains, but a small newspaper. In other words, it has reverted almost to the format in which it was first published in 1801. The question whether a high-grade small newspaper can succeed is an interesting one to the journalistic fraternity. Hence this experiment will be carefully watched. There can be no doubt that the strap-hanger likes a more convenient size than that of the standard dailies, but whether as much news can be printed and as well displayed is another matter. That the *Evening Post* has not been doing well since its purchase by Cyrus H. K. Curtis has been known of all men. Its editorial page has been without weight or character and its news columns have lacked a clear-cut policy, although containing excellent special dispatches from abroad. Being conservative, it lost its liberal following to the *World-Telegram;* on the other hand, it could not rival the evening *Sun,* which has just celebrated the centennial of the founding of the old morning *Sun* by Benjamin H. Day. Hence a change in the status of the historic *Evening Post* was inevitable. Its success now depends upon its ability to win a popularity based upon its convenient format combined with an adequate presentation of the news.

WHEN SCIENCE is *not* advancing, that's news. Indeed, what with technological unemployment and the constant danger that man may get still more power to blow himself up with, it has even come to seem good news. We welcome, therefore, the announcement made by Lord Rutherford before the British Academy for the Advancement of Science to the effect that there is no immediate prospect of tapping, for use or abuse, the energy locked up in the atom. We were beginning to fear that there was, and to be appropriately alarmed. Listen, however, to these reassuring words reported by the Associated Press: "The energy produced by the breakdown of the atom is a very poor thing. Anyone who expects a source of power from the transformation of these atoms is talking moonshine." All we have to worry about now is steam power, water power, dynamite, poison gas, and microbes.

What About Prices?

"CONSIDERATION of price is, I think, the greatest need in the NRA today," wrote William F. Ogburn in last week's *Nation.* We agree with him, for it is the movement of prices that will settle eventually the success or failure of the entire recovery program. Prices in general are bound to go up if the recovery plan works at all. Higher prices are what the public bargained for when it accepted President Roosevelt's scheme, although a good many persons seem to have forgotten that fact and to be dismayed when confronted with an actual rise in the cost of living. Stated nakedly, the recovery program is intended to redistribute the national income so that certain classes will have a larger share than now. That means, of course—although this is not generally stressed—that other classes will have relatively less. The idea is more euphemistically expressed in the newspapers as "increasing the buying power of farmers and wage-earners." It would be too harsh to describe the program as robbing Peter to pay Paul. More correctly it is a concession of a little more to Paul on the part of Peter in order to enable Peter to retain anything at all. Also there are two Pauls: Paul I, the farmer, and Paul II, the wage-earner, whose interests are in many respects diametrically opposed.

Paul I is to be subsidized by raising the price of farm products through reducing their quantity. This is to be accomplished by payments to keep land out of cultivation, the money for which is coming from taxes—already effective on wheat and cotton—calculated to raise the price of farm products to all consumers, but bearing especially on Peter and Paul II. Meanwhile Paul II is to be assisted by shortening industrial working hours and so absorbing some of the unemployed. But the industrial codes are not just a spread-the-work scheme devised merely to extend existing wage payments to more persons. They propose by minimum-wage scales to increase hourly pay, which means higher cost of production and thus increased prices for both Pauls as well as for Peter. Paul I stands to gain only if the prices of what he sells advance proportionally more than those of what he buys. Paul II will benefit only if the average yearly earnings per worker increase more than the advance in his customary budget. An increase of the nation's total pay roll without any advance in average yearly earnings would mean that some of the unemployed had been absorbed but the standard of living of those who had been at work right along was as low or lower than ever.

It should be evident, then, that the movement of prices in the next few months will determine the fate of the recovery program. *The Nation* is supporting that program, in spite of all its dangers and possibilities of miscarriage, in the hope that the contemplated benefits will go to the two Pauls. If instead there is a runaway of prices and the increases to the average American's cost of living which are intended to go to farmers and wage-earners are absorbed by manufacturers, merchants, bankers, and a crew of promoters, manipulators, and speculators, then the national-recovery program will in fact become a rout headed toward destruction.

What are the indications so far? In regard to the

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farmers, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics states that the farmer's dollar last June was 62 per cent of what it was from 1909 to 1914. By July 15 it had moved up to 71 per cent, but on August 15 it had dropped to 64 per cent. Farmers in the Middle West have been quoted in the newspapers as complaining that the price of overalls was going up faster than that of wheat, but on September 14 Fred C. Howe, consumers' counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, stated that higher retail prices had been reflected generally in better payments to farmers:

> Fifteen of the sixteen representative foods reported on [Dr. Howe said] show higher prices to consumers on August 15 than on February 15. We have analyzed changes in the farm prices of thirteen and find that the margin between farm and consumer prices has changed only slightly if the amount of the processing tax on wheat is deducted from the margins on flour products. This tax will eventually be used for the benefit of the wheat grower. This indicates that generally the farmers are getting the benefit of the extra money that consumers are paying out.
>
> Increase in farmers' income is only half the story [Dr. Howe continued]. The other half is the increased cost of things the farmer must buy. The latter increased between February 15 and August 15 to an average of 11 per cent above pre-war level, against an average increase in farm prices of 23 per cent. While we have reduced the gap between these two prices in the first six months of the recovery program, we are still a long way from our goal of parity in prices for farmers.

In an effort to benefit the farmer and protect the consumer, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration is making public the extra cost of various articles which is legitimately chargeable to the processing tax. It states, for instance, that the tax on a cotton sheet 81 by 99 inches, retailing at an average price of $1.16, is just under 8 cents, or 7 per cent. On work shirts selling on August 30 in twenty-two cities at an average price of 85 cents the tax is 3½ cents, or 4 per cent. Recently some evidences of profiteering have appeared. Dr. Howe says:

> Since these retail prices were collected, advertisements in the press and trade letters report much greater increases than had occurred up to August 31. In some cases these advances amount to as much as 50 per cent. I have before me now a list of the wholesale prices of five standard brands of sheets. The new net price of every single one is quoted at least 40 per cent above the March-April price; one is even 100 per cent higher. Another list of four different brands of cotton towels shows an advance of at least 75 per cent over the March or May quotations for each brand. One brand each of men's shirts has been priced up 40 per cent; cotton matrices, 84 per cent; union suits, 27 per cent; boys' shirts, 52 per cent, over their low price for the year.

In regard to bread the A. A. A. estimates that on an eight-cent loaf the processing tax amounts to about half a cent. Bakers in Atlanta, Charleston, Mobile, Savannah, Scranton, San Francisco, and Seattle have recently been asked to explain why they should charge a cent more for a pound loaf than the average national price.

It is only fair to say that the processing taxes of the A. A. A. are not the only extra costs. There are also, of course, the additional burdens imposed by the codes of the National Recovery Administration and the inevitable increase in price due to the action of this country in going off the gold basis. These rises are more intricate and individual than those due to the processing taxes, and as yet the public has received no information in regard to what allowances should be made for them.

The control of prices must be undertaken adequately and promptly by the NRA if the public is to have any confidence in the honesty or effectiveness of the recovery program. We have an intimation already as to what direction price control may take. A provision has been written into the tentative code for retailers prepared by the NRA which would fix retail prices for food at 7½ per cent above wholesale cost and for other merchandise at 10 per cent beyond that amount. Such a method would be more immediate and direct than a limitation of earnings, but it would practically eliminate the reputed benefits of competition and entail the various disadvantages that experience has shown to be associated with the "cost plus" system. In any event, the necessity of price control is squarely before the Administration.

We Dump Wheat

THE Agricultural Adjustment Administration moves forward. Its latest move is to begin to subsidize the exportation of from 30,000,000 to 35,000,000 bushels of stored wheat from the Pacific Northwest. It plans to sell this wheat at a price from 15 to 20 cents below the domestic level. It expects to take a loss of up to $7,000,000. This loss will be paid out of the proceeds of the processing tax. In other words, it will be paid ultimately by the consumer of bread, in proportion not to his wealth but to his need for bread.

It is to be hoped that the officials who are putting this policy into effect will not attempt to deceive either the country or themselves regarding its real nature. It is a deliberate, officially sanctioned, and officially organized policy of dumping. The American government in the past has always viewed dumping on the part of other nations—witness the hysteria over the alleged dumping of Russian lumber a year or two ago—with a mixture of dread and indignation.

It is hardly necessary to point to the unsoundness and the dangers of our new policy of dumping when the task has already been done so well by the Department of Agriculture itself. In the last session of Congress the Senate asked for a report on the status of world trade barriers in relation to American agriculture. The experts in the Department of Agriculture then prepared a voluminous report of some 370,000 words on the subject. The report was transmitted to the Senate on June 7 with an admirable covering letter by Secretary Wallace, and is now published.

There is a section in it devoted to export dumping. It begins with a definition: "The word 'dumping' is sometimes used loosely to indicate the selling of goods at excessively low prices, or regardless of price, but this is not what is meant here. In its more technical sense, dumping means the sale of exported goods at less than the price prevailing in the country of origin." There could not be a more exact description of the policy we are now about to adopt. "Dumping of farm products," the report continues, "is effected in some cases by an export subsidy, either direct or indirect." What is the effect of dumping? One of the first effects, the

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report points out, is to lower the world price of the commodity concerned. One of the next effects, it continues, is to provoke retaliation both by countries that import the commodity concerned and by other countries that export it. The general tendency to raise world tariff barriers is strengthened everywhere. Anti-dumping provisions, the report points out, are already contained in the tariff laws of some countries, and other countries will naturally adopt such provisions. "In a struggle between a country offering an export bounty and an importing country which retaliates by tariffs or other import restrictions, it is usually the latter which is likely to win. . . . Furthermore, when dumping is applied to a product by one country, other countries are likely to take similar action in order to protect their producers against the price decline resulting from dumping by the first country. This tends further to reduce the world price," thus hurting producers everywhere. The report goes on to cite the unfortunate consequences in Germany and elsewhere when Germany began dumping rye a few years ago; as soon as Poland and other countries followed a similar course, the whole policy had to be abandoned. Export bounties have had similar bad effects in the case of sugar. The report concludes that whatever advantage an export bounty brings to producers in the country that adopts it is temporary, and that its long-run effects are always likely to be injurious to the producers themselves. A policy of dumping, in other words, is not only another move in stifling international trade and in increasing the intensity of the world trade war; it is shortsighted even from the most narrowly nationalistic standpoint. It may be that Secretary Wallace, in transmitting so voluminous a report, did not have an opportunity to read it. We commend the section on export dumping to his earliest attention.

God and Mathematics

PROFESSOR EINSTEIN is, in a sense at least, the layman's friend. He may once have remarked that there were only twelve men in all the world who could understand his theory of time and relativity, but no one can say that he has ever attempted to rub it in. When he talks to mere mortals he changes the subject, and he does not, like the Messrs. Eddington and Jeans, write long books which come down at last to the condescending assurance that of course the layman cannot hope ever really to understand what it is all about. Professor Einstein, indeed, is almost apologetic, and he is certainly the last man in the world likely to throw a differential equation wantonly in the face of any humble bystander. If he bewilders us—as he certainly does—it seems always to be rather because he must than merely because he thinks it fun.

For this reason it is all the more disconcerting to read the semi-popular Herbert Spencer Lecture* which he recently delivered at Oxford University. He still, to be sure, believes that this is a dependable universe ruled by law, and that opinion is something of a comfort to such of us as have been more than a little disturbed by these new prophets of indeterminism who are inclined to attribute a free will to the atoms. But Einstein does, on the other hand, fall in enthusiastically with another current tendency almost equally alarming to the layman—the tendency to deify mathematics and to regard it not merely as a valuable tool or as a method of thought but as something extraordinarily close to reality itself.

Perhaps he does not quite say, as Bertrand Russell once did, that an equation is less a description of what happens than it is the happening itself. Certainly he does not go so far as another contemporary scientist, who has proclaimed that God and the calculus are so completely identical that the Creation was merely some formulas conceived in the mind of a great mathematician. But Einstein is, nevertheless, willing to express the opinion that the mathematician escapes from the limitations imposed by the purely human character of other methods of thought.

> The axiomatic basis of theoretical physics cannot be an inference from experience, but must be free invention. . . . [Nevertheless] our experience up to today justifies us in feeling sure that in Nature is actualized the ideal of mathematical simplicity. . . . In a certain sense, therefore, I hold it to be true that pure thought is competent to comprehend the real, as the ancients dreamed.

Nothing could be farther from the tendency of those nineteenth-century philosophers of science who held that the only road to truth was through generalizations from experience, many of whom would have agreed that mathematics, far from being different in its nature from other devices invented by the human mind, was merely what Karl Pearson called the most convenient of the "conceptual shorthands" which man employs in his efforts to describe a reality with which he can never hope to come in contact. Professor Einstein, moreover, is obviously aware of the fact that he is, by an act of faith in his instrument, proclaiming his escape from the solipsistic predicament into which the philosopher of science has been sinking deeper and deeper since the days of Hume and Kant. He is, in other words, reviving the belief that, "as the ancients dreamed," human reason is not merely human but identical with Nature herself. Science, or at least mathematical science, is not merely what Pearson called "a description of the past and a belief concerning the future" based upon more or less dubious generalizations deduced from Nature's past behavior. Science, at least in so far as it is mathematical, is, on the contrary, reality itself. Laplace once remarked that "Nature laughs at the difficulties of integration." The phrase is one whose full wit can only be understood by those who know something of the difficulties which are met with when the calculus is applied to the resolution of physical problems, but Einstein would doubtless reply that Nature laughs simply because Nature is, herself, the supreme mathematician.

Far be it from us to have an opinion on the subject, but we realize rather uncomfortably that Einstein's attitude does tend once more to create a sort of priestly class. Formerly the scientist was merely a man who had a great deal of knowledge of the same sort as that of which we all had a little. He used the instruments which we used, even though he used them more skilfully, and he was as far as the layman from any comprehension of the ultimate mystery. Today the mathematician belongs to a special class of illuminati. We see through the dark glass of our purely human understanding, but he sees face to face. God is an equation.

* "On the Method of Theoretical Physics." By Albert Einstein. Oxford University Press. 50 cents.

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Issues and Men

Norman Thomas and the New York Election

I AM happy to give space to the following letter from Norman Thomas — regretting that I could not find space for it before now:

DEAR MR. VILLARD: I have just read with unusual interest your personally signed comment on Fiorello H. La Guardia in *The Nation* of August 30, 1933. In one paragraph you are good enough to say that "the best leader for the fusion forces would have been Norman Thomas," which gives me something of a personal claim on *The Nation's* space to thank you for the compliment and to explain my own position.

For me to have become leader of the fusion forces this year would have been an act of betrayal not altogether dissimilar in quality to Ramsay MacDonald's desertion of his old associates. I am a Socialist. The passion of my life is the establishment of the cooperative commonwealth. To have led the fusion forces as now constituted in New York City would have meant not only that I should put aside that great goal, at least temporarily, but that I should risk becoming Mayor at a time when the Mayor may be scarcely more than a receiver in bankruptcy under a broken-down political and economic system. Remember what fusion is at its best: an extraordinary conglomeration of incompatibles, united by a common hatred of Tammany or perhaps more accurately by a common hope that this year Tammany can be thrown out of office. Its backbone is still the Republican Party, and even in the unlikely event that Sam Koenig is defeated as leader of one of the five counties comprising the city, there is no reason under the sun to think that the Republican machine in Greater New York will be other than it has been—a despicable jackal of Tammany in local affairs and nationally the tool of the most Bourbon elements in the party of Coolidge and Hoover. If Republican leaders like Koenig give sincere support at all to fusion, it will be in the hope that they can get more offices that way than Tammany gives them under our bipartisan system. Under these circumstances what becomes of any hope of building up that effective political instrument which you have declared that you want no less than I?

I do not believe that you will answer my question by that hoary fallacy: "The government of New York City is merely a job for an honest and capable administrator. It does not involve political and economic issues." Of course it does. You cannot draw up a program for New York—something that the fusion conglomeration has not yet dared to try to do—without being inspired consciously or unconsciously by the desire either to perpetuate as long as possible in this great city the kingdom of private profit or to substitute social ownership for it. Even the most carefully framed progressive program for New York City will require at least permissive legislation at Albany and perhaps Washington. The coordination of this program requires a political party, not a mere fusion to throw out certain rascals.

You are not a Socialist as I am, but if I remember correctly, you were one of the enthusiasts for Lincoln Steffens's explanation of municipal corruption as an inevitable accompaniment and expression of class rule in our city. Tammany, as I have said a thousand times, is a political broker among bankers who have robbed the producing masses far more than Jimmy Walker and landlords who have appropriated for themselves our common possession, the earth, and public-utility magnates and other members of an owning class. It keeps the masses quiet with a minimum number of concessions. Sometimes the leaders blunder. Their brokerage charges become too high and there is a temporary revolt. Men who in their hearts really want cheap government identify it with good government. Newspapers which were deaf to all I said about Tammany corruption in 1925 and to a good deal that I said about it in 1929 suddenly become roused for the purity of the city, and another reform wave is on us.

But it is always "practical." It chooses a comptroller, a banker without any special civic record, because he meets certain racial, religious, and geographical considerations. It renominates Harvey, Walker's Republican errand boy, who proposed his own salary raise at the beginning of the depression, and who escaped removal from office at the hands of Governor Roosevelt by the narrowest of margins. His presence on the ticket prevents it from having even the common denominator of conventional good-government idealism. It has no positive program and is held together only by a negative opposition to Tammany. My old friend Major La Guardia cannot save it under these circumstances. Had he given ten times the evidence that he has of possessing a positive program for redeeming New York from bankers, public-utility magnates, and landlords, inevitably he would be conditioned by his associates, some of whom in the past he denounced in language whose vigor I envy.

History supports all that I have said. Each reform administration has failed, and on the whole deservedly failed, to capture the imagination of the masses of the people, to whom the Tammany district leader, with all his crimes, is a more understandable and approachable figure than the more respectable representatives of a system which oppresses them. Surely in this great crisis it is not the time for men like you to be content with the little gain, if gain it proves to be, of turning the Tammany rascals out, only to have them come back in four years, perhaps with renewed strength. Nothing less than a new vision of the kind of city that New York can be made, not as an oasis in a desert but as a part of a cooperative commonwealth, and organization in the light of that vision will save us. It is my sober judgment that when men like you rally to the support of fusion on no more adequate grounds than you have given, you increase popular confusion and prolong the day of exploitation for the toiling masses. Men whose supreme purpose is the redemption of New York might well have rallied to the Socialist banner and to the Socialist program worked out long before some of our present moralists discovered in adversity the iniquity of Tammany. That is why I am fighting this year for the Socialist cause, for the excellent Socialist ticket headed by Solomon, Crosswaith, and Laidler. It is one more battle in the struggle for the emancipation of mankind, not merely from Tammany, but from the dying capitalist system of which it is an integral and not the most shameful part.

New York, August 31 NORMAN THOMAS

For Mr. Thomas's position I have much sympathy. I think none of my readers will accuse me of a fear of lost causes or unwillingness to ally myself with them. It is just thirty-five years this fall since I joined a handful of Mug-

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wumps and "Goo-Goos" in nominating a third candidate for the governorship of New York after Theodore Roosevelt had broken his solemn word to accept an independent nomination from them. They asked him to promise to run on their ticket whether Boss Platt of the Republican Party nominated him or not and he did so. The Boss selected him and the Colonel broke his word—and this was not the only time. We had only the *Evening Post* and one or two other dailies supporting us, but we went ahead and held Theodore, with all his Rough Rider *réclame,* to a majority of 18,000—a change of 9,000 votes would have ended his march to the Presidency.

I cite this merely to reinforce the point that if by voting for the Socialist Party in the present mayoralty campaign one could make an effective protest against an untrustworthy "reform" leader, or if one could nail one's colors to the mast and go it alone for high and clear principle, I should not hesitate for a moment. But I cannot see the present campaign in that light. New York City has the best chance in many years to turn Tammany out. I admit that the fusion ticket is a ticket of compromises; at least one of the candidates for borough president, Mr. Harvey, is quite unworthy to be reelected. I admit that La Guardia is vulnerable in spots, that he has played the political game, and will probably play it to some extent if elected to the mayoralty. Everybody knows the Republican machine in New York City is about as corrupt and crooked as Tammany itself, and will make ruthless demands for patronage if La Guardia gets in. But Major La Guardia has proved his courage and his progressivism—he once ran on a Socialist ticket. His heart is rightly placed and his sympathy is with the masses. More than that, he realizes fully that a fusion victory will amount to nothing at all if there is no radical remolding of the city's charter. To this the Major is pledged. If he does not make good on this—with the help of the legislature—we shall have won nothing lasting. Finally, he is absolutely honest; he knows that the city faces a dreadful financial situation and is practically bankrupt, that it is entirely in the hands of the bankers.

What is the alternative? Reelect the stupidest Mayor New York has ever had, who was booed for twenty minutes last week by some of the NRA marchers? Give Tammany four more years of power—this filthy organization, held together only "by the cohesive power of public plunder," which lives on graft and by grace of our crooked corporations? Four more years, while city and nation are in the gravest crisis? Yet this is what might come to pass if the Socialist mayoralty ticket polled a large number of votes—sufficient to defeat La Guardia. Oh yes, I know the argument that one should take one's stand on abstract principles and I have done it many times when the lesson of such a stand was obvious and clear. Besides, I feel, with each month and each year, an intensification of my conviction that the Socialist Party cannot be made into the radical, progressive party that liberals everywhere are hoping for. No party under that label can, in my judgment, hope to achieve any noteworthy success in the United States. Can anyone doubt that after the record of the last campaign, when the Socialist ticket polled only one-fortieth of the total vote although it was headed by so able a man and estimable a character as Norman Thomas?

Certainly in New York City the party is making no headway, even in this time of terrible depression. It is even losing some of its most valuable adherents, as, for example, Heywood Broun, and now Paul Blanshard—the latter just the type for leadership, an admirable campaigner, and one of the greatest authorities on conditions in New York City. He feels that the party cannot realize its great opportunity because the American working class has "come to think of it as an insignificant and permanently defeated organization." "Roosevelt," he adds, "with his program of managed capitalism has taken the initiative away from us in immediate economic change. . . ." Finally, Mr. Blanshard says, "there is a point at which further optimism concerning the future of the Socialist Party becomes deception, and each party member must judge for himself whether he has reached that point."

Norman Thomas is right: I shall not be "content with the little gain if gain it proves to be, of turning the Tammany rascals out." I shall continue, as I have for thirty-five years past, to preach a "vision of the kind of city that New York can be made, not as an oasis in a desert, but as a part of a cooperative commonwealth and organization." I was preaching much of that doctrine when Norman Thomas was still a newsboy in Marion, and I shall continue to preach it as long as I have a voice to lift up or a pen to serve. But I cannot feel the slightest compunction of conscience in throwing myself whole-heartedly into the campaign for La Guardia's election. The alternative is too terrible, particularly for the masses whom Tammany always exploits in the guise of being the best friend of the toilers. It may be that temporarily this fusion ticket will confuse the masses, but they are tremendously confused as it is, by the depression, by NRA, by the mixed advantages of Roosevelt's leadership, by the generally chaotic state of the world. We are at the beginning of a great upheaval. But if that were not the case I should still risk temporary confusion to land a man in office who realizes that there can be no genuine victory over Tammany Hall if the whole structure of government in New York City is not remodeled.

Those of us liberals who support Major La Guardia's candidacy will, of course, be under the most solemn obligation to keep after him, if he is chosen, in behalf of the reformation of the city charter; above all we must continue to fight for proportional representation. It will be our greatest duty to stress with Major La Guardia the plight of the unemployed, the destitute, the homeless, and the starving, to insist that the municipal administration throw itself into the task of abolishing the slums of the city by going into the business of itself erecting adequate housing for the poor at the earliest possible moment. With all due respect to Norman Thomas and the excellence of the Socialist ticket, this is not a year when there can be an effective protest vote under Mr. Solomon's leadership. I am very much afraid that the total party vote will be well under 100,000—it may even go down to 50,000. I hate to part company with Norman Thomas at any time, so fine is the man, and so essentially sound and true are his beliefs, but for me this year there is no other choice. I shall write and speak for Fiorello La Guardia until the polls close on election day.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Can the NRA Succeed?

By ALBERT EVANS

THE NRA is the greatest business venture ever undertaken in the United States. It is therefore natural that its day-to-day doings should hold the spotlight, and its program be dissected from every angle. The sophisticated big industrialists see in it a great opportunity for advancing the domination of big business. Old-fashioned business men are deeply stirred because it transgresses traditions and principles which they hold sacred and inviolable. Liberals, who become intoxicated by the sheer movement of good men and women, see in it endless possibilities for achieving many of their long-cherished dreams. Tired radicals discover in it the disguised approach of the Socialist commonwealth, while militant revolutionaries see nothing but fascism behind the sheltering wings of the Blue Eagle.

It seems everywhere to be taken for granted that the method embodied in the NRA is not only the sole economic means of bringing back prosperity, but that if its mechanisms are carried through successfully it must, of necessity, attain the ends it seeks. Few voices have so far been raised to ask the basic query whether the complicated and cumbersome structure of the NRA, which daily grows more top-heavy and unwieldy, really has in it the possibility of achieving the main objectives it has set out to attain, namely, an increase in the total national purchasing power and the abolition, or at least the effective reduction, of our army of from thirteen to fifteen million unemployed.

Before proceeding with our inquiry, it may be readily granted that the NRA program has been conceived and undertaken with the most honorable and unselfish motives. It has been devised by good and true men with none but the best intentions. The Administration's aim is definitely the promotion of the social good, and it is putting all its energies into making the NRA a success. It cannot be denied either that the entire program entails a basic change in social attitudes and may foreshadow real and vital changes in the American scene. These ultimate consequences, however, depend upon so many unknown factors that it is futile to speculate concerning them at this moment. What is of transcendent importance now is not the good intentions of the inaugurators of the NRA, or its possible ultimate results, but the very fundamental question whether this program, as it is being developed, has any real chance of increasing the total national purchasing power and restoring jobs to the unemployed. As a corollary, it must also be asked whether the massive and clumsy structure of the NRA was really the only method available to achieve these ends.

An examination of the NRA mechanisms seems to indicate that in essence they do not differ greatly from our innumerable previous attempts to achieve prosperity by lifting ourselves by our own bootstraps. The bases upon which the program is founded are far from realistic or scientific, and its instrumentalities inevitably run into circles. The NRA aims to increase the purchasing power of the nation principally through the following means: (1) the reduction of working hours per week, presumably in order to force the employment of workers now out of jobs; (2) the raising of wages for the lowest-paid workers so as to augment their purchasing power; (3) the encouragement of workers to organize into effective unions in order to raise their standards of living; (4) the bringing of order and coordination into industry by the abolition of unfair competition and the introduction of a modicum of economic planning.

The reduction of the weekly working hours to thirty-five for industrial workers and forty for clerical workers is the cornerstone of the NRA program. It is generally taken for granted that this alone will, of necessity, force the employment of millions of new workers. It is this confident hope which caused General Hugh S. Johnson to make the extravagant prediction a few weeks ago of the employment of six million additional workers by Labor Day. But while this assumption might have had some plausibility in 1928 or 1929, when the average hours of work per week exceeded forty-eight, it has no such implications in 1933, when the average weekly working hours in manufacturing industries during the year's first five months were only 34.7.

The entire conception that the mere reduction of the hours of labor means the automatic addition of new workers is utterly unrealistic today. It ignores completely the stupendous technological developments during the depression. The extent of these factors is only partly told in the recent figures of the Federal Reserve Board. While industrial production last June increased 31 points over March of this year, factory pay rolls increased by only 9.3 points, and factory employment rose by only 7.4 points during the same period. This indicates that a considerable rise in productivity can be achieved without increasing either the number of employees or the amount of pay rolls. Moreover, a substantial increase in production per man-hour can be achieved with a force that is worked at top speed for thirty-five hours a week as against the pre-depression hours. The speeding-up process in industry has not by any means reached its fullest development.

Not only do all codes allow more than thirty-five working hours during seasonal periods, but some of the most important codes set up as their regular system a longer working week. The naive belief that the average manufacturing concern which found it profitable to work its employees fifty and sixty hours a week because they were cheap will continue to use the same number of man-hours when it has to hire new and dear help ignores a basic fact of modern industrial life. Unless the demand for goods greatly exceeds all immediate expectations, there is no assurance whatsoever that factory hours need be increased and extra workers taken on.

Indeed, there is already sufficient evidence to indicate that the reduction in hours of work, instead of resulting in increased employment and added purchasing power, is actually diminishing the purchasing power of those workers who were employed full time before the NRA program was instituted. The purchasing power of many workers in those industries which formerly worked their employees fifty and sixty hours has been greatly reduced. Instead of receiving, say, fifty times 40 cents per week, they now receive

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only thirty-five times 40 cents per week. True, the code specifies that employers are to make an "equitable adjustment" in the case of such reductions, but it is up to the employer to decide what "equitable" means.

Only those businesses which cater directly to the public and cannot readily adjust themselves to the reduced hours of operation will be compelled to hire new employees. But since it is only natural to expect that they will seek every possible means for evading such additions to their pay rolls, the total result in increased employment growing out of the reduction of the hours of work cannot be expected to make any appreciable dent in the rolls of the unemployed, outside of other social forces.

The forty-hour week for white-collar workers does not from the start affect the hundreds of thousands of office workers who for many years have been working thirty-eight or thirty-nine hours a week. Indeed, thousands of employers who sign up for Blue Eagles not only have no intention of taking on new employees, but can honestly sign up because for many years they have maintained a standard of working conditions above that prescribed by the NRA. Furthermore, many employers can readily adjust their clerical forces to a somewhat reduced day without the necessity of adding new workers, since such workers can be easily speeded up. If cheap labor is no longer obtainable, employers will soon find that a mimeograph can replace quite a number of typists and an addressograph can replace scores of envelope writers. It may have been less costly to employ five girls at $2 per day than to purchase an addressograph, but the latter may prove considerably cheaper if the five girls have to be paid $3 per day. Thus, nothing in either the President's blanket agreement or the industrial codes warrants the assumption of considerable additional employment mainly as a result of the reduction in the weekly hours of labor.

The premise that a minimum wage ranging from $11 to $15 per week will *ipso facto* increase the total national purchasing power is also without scientific foundation. It is true that office boys, apprentices, store clerks, and low-paid workers in certain industries stand definitely to benefit by the codes and that their purchasing power will be augmented. But it does not follow that the net result may not involve an actual decrease in the total purchasing power for any particular industry or for the nation as a whole. Employers will discover before long that many of those who were formerly considered cheap and inefficient workers are really endowed with considerable talent and can do almost as good work as was done formerly by employees who received twice or more the minimum wages specified in the codes.

Although the codes prohibit the reduction of the weekly wages of workers who have received higher than the minimum prescribed, there is no possible way of enforcing this stipulation. It is not necessary for any employer to go through the motions of an official reduction. Since nothing in the codes prohibits dismissals and lay-offs, he need only inform his older or higher-paid employees that for one reason or another he is compelled to reduce his force or that the factory may have to shut down. American trade-union experience shows that as soon as such rumors spread, many workers volunteer to accept a reduction in their wages in order to stay on. Even union agreements won after bitter and prolonged strikes have been shattered by such tactics a few weeks later. At the worst, an employer can dismiss or lay off his expensive workers and rehire them later at a wage more nearly approaching the minimum set by the code. The endless possibilities of such reductions are thoroughly unexplored, and there is no way of estimating at this time whether the possible reductions in the wages of higher-paid employees may not exceed the meager increases in the purchasing power of the lowest-paid wage-earners. Unless historical precedents no longer apply, there is real danger that the NRA program of minimum wages, with its unwieldy mechanisms for enforcement, may actually result in a serious decrease rather than an increase in labor's total purchasing power.

There is, of course, the hope that governmental protection of workers' rights in collective bargaining will bring the masses of workers into sturdy unions which will prevent such consequences. But this is at best only a faint hope. The obstacles inherent in the traditions and history of American workers and American trade unions do not warrant real optimism in this respect. Mere governmental sanction cannot of itself create a militant labor movement. Millions of workers in the United States had full freedom of organization before the NRA came into the field, and they shied away from labor unions as from the plague. There is no real foundation for the belief that the masses of workers in the basic industries where no unions exist will now eagerly form such unions.

American workers basically lack an understanding of the meaning of trade unionism. Their prejudices and often their experience with union organizations have made them almost as antagonistic and bitter toward trade unions as their employers. So long as the employer is halfway decent, the workers have an abiding faith in him and will rather take counsel from him than from "outside agitators." The great mass of unorganized American workers will probably continue to look to the employer for sanction of labor unions and sometimes even for espousal before they will join. The most that can be hoped for is that the more vigorous and energetic unions which already have a foothold in industry will gain strength through the codes.

Not only will the traditions of the workers prove difficult to overcome for many years, but anyone familiar with the background and history of the American labor movement knows that even a revived labor movement will for many years prove itself incapable, because of its inherent lack of social philosophy and leadership, of organizing and holding the unorganized and low-paid workers. Governmental approval is not sufficient to inspire a weak and diseased organism to perform miracles. Whether we like it or not, all students of American labor know that America simply lacks the fundamental basis for a vital unionism; and without strong and spirited trade unions there is no possible way of making the labor provisions of the codes truly effective.

Not infrequently, in order to prove its inevitable success, the NRA program is compared with such national programs as those adopted in Italy and Germany. No one, however, has yet been so rash as to assert that the programs of those countries have really resulted in increased purchasing power or a reduction in unemployment. But even if they had, it would prove nothing, since the NRA program is in nowise comparable to these foreign schemes. Italy and Germany have undergone vital spiritual revolutions of which their economic changes have been only secondary conse-

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quences. These revolutions were preceded by great national movements and have been put into operation by groups of fanatical and ruthless leaders. Without minimizing in the slightest the deep social significance of the NRA program, it is obvious that its revolutionary elements consist chiefly in its mechanisms and not in its fundamental principles. The program leaves completely untouched the accumulations of great wealth. The profit system remains secure. The NRA is not based on a conscious national demand. Instead, there is merely the hope that the NRA will result in the creation of a new attitude, after its stupendous campaign of ballyhoo, Blue Eagles, parades, buttons, and four-minute speakers. And apparently what the Administration seeks to achieve is not a fundamental change in our present economic structure, but the creation of a more extended system of governmental regulation. The long and futile experience with the much easier job of governmental regulation of public utilities is sufficient to shatter any hope of considerable success in this task.

The success of the NRA program depends not only on labor but also on the public in general and the individual consumer in particular. But here even greater doubt of its effectiveness arises. As thousands of complaints pour in every day, General Johnson storms and threatens dire consequences while different committees issue conflicting interpretations as to what punishment will be meted out to non-conformers. The best that can be said is that so far the government has no idea of how to enforce its program and may not even contemplate it. It merely hopes that with sufficient ballyhoo, passion, intolerance, and patriotic browbeating it can arouse one hundred thirty million men, women, and children to see that the codes are enforced. It trusts to universal cooperation.

The NRA leaders hope that by using the methods followed during the Great War the program's success will be assured. They give no consideration to the completely reversed conditions. It was comparatively easy to browbeat lowly workers into buying bonds and enlisting when war passions were aroused and when big business was at the top, exerting pressure on the workers. It is quite a different story when humble workers, depending on their jobs, have to bring pressure upon the boss. The NRA program must depend for its enforcement principally upon the cooperation and assistance of the most helpless and unorganized workers, the habitually unprotesting American consumer, and the distressed housewife. The licensing provisions of the codes would require for their success a truly conscious working class, and we have none of that.

The final aim of the NRA program to bring order and coordination into industry inevitably counteracts all the good sought through its labor provisions. Sophisticated industrialists have been praying for such a program for many years. They have been willing to surrender some of their laissez faire privileges for the greater advantage of the abolition of the anti-trust laws and the regulation of competition. The industrial codes not only give them this long-hoped-for opportunity, but definitely select trade associations, which are naturally dominated by the largest corporations, to regulate their own houses. The trade associations are to establish the definitions of fair competition and fair prices. The government's partnership will prove meaningless, since it will take many years of study before a government administrator will be able to determine what each industry's new problems really are in order to decide what "unfair" competition and "fair" prices are. Professor Ogburn's warnings in this respect should prove sufficient, although his suggested remedies would fall far short of solving the problem.

The history of American business associations shows that, despite their talk of "service," they have never been over-zealous where consumers were concerned. The tedious rate at which codes have been adopted and the difficulties encountered in the codes of the basic industries prove conclusively that there is little hope of the conversion to a new social ethics of those who hold the key positions. Industries are accepting codes only after bitter struggles and because they can find no way out. It is certain that they will attempt to pass on all the additional costs to the consumers. If, at very best, prices rise only in proportion to the rise in total wages, the nation will not have achieved a single additional penny in true purchasing power despite the stupendous effort and excitement. If the Administration desires really to control prices it will have to control profits, and once it starts in that direction it will require other means than those provided by the NRA.

In view of these considerations, it seems pertinent to inquire whether the NRA scheme is, in fact, the only one available for attaining the very desirable aims which the Administration has in view. America's problem during the past few years has not been the problem of complete national poverty, such as confronted many other countries. Our suffering is largely due to over-abundant wealth on the one hand and crushing indebtedness on the other. The chief trouble lies in the maldistribution of our national wealth. The oversubscription of every bond issue has demonstrated that the accumulated unproductive wealth in the United States is amply sufficient to lift the depression by the simple inauguration of a great program of unemployment relief together with a really extensive program of public works. Although it was plainly and disgustingly shown that the bulk of the very rich have escaped paying income taxes during the entire depression, the Administration has neglected to add a cent to the income taxes of the wealthy and ignored the plain truth that if there is money for the purchase of bonds there is money for taxation.

Not only have we failed to revise our ludicrous system of taxation and use wealth as a means of increasing purchasing power, but in selecting the untested, ponderous, and very doubtful scheme of the NRA, we have also failed to examine the simple, tested, and efficacious plans of social insurance such as have been adopted in democratic countries to meet the problems of the unemployed. Despite the outcries of English Tories, there stands, for instance, the example of Great Britain, which, through a better distribution of national income and through a simplified large-scale program of social insurance—which in 1932 expended seven dollars for every dollar spent in this country—was enabled during its long-drawn-out depression to keep its average unemployment down to 13 per cent for the decade 1921-31 as against our 30 or even 40 per cent of unemployment during the present depression.

In view of the long-tried and successful experience of Great Britain, it is indeed strange that we should have embraced instead the complicated and clumsy plan of the NRA, which, even if carried to a complete success, is at best uncertain to attain its very desirable ultimate ends.

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The Blue Eagle Meets Bad Weather

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, September 17

ALREADY the Blue Eagle has encountered stormy weather, but it will see very much worse before it sees any very much better. Its tribulations are due in part to mistakes of policy and in part to natural circumstances, but to an enormously greater extent they are due to the inborn and seemingly impregnable stupidity of American industry. That the economic machine rolled as far as it did without crashing is but another sign of its almost boob-proof nature. When I see a pack of industrial barbarians, such as the soft-coal operators, desperately resisting every effort to preserve their property and the livings of their workers, I am inclined to believe that perhaps the Communists are right after all, and that the most direct course out of this morass would be to resort to several well-chosen hangings. The condition has been aggravated by the delay in getting the public-works and farm-relief programs under way, as compared with the speed at which General Johnson and his aids have rushed the industrial-recovery measures. A final complication is the failure of the so-called "capital goods" industries to resume production on a scale warranted by the country's physical needs and the activities of the federal government—a failure that may be laid to sheer cowardice and lack of foresight. Despite the superhuman efforts of the NRA staff, the future is far from assured. In some aspects, indeed, the prospects are thoroughly disquieting.

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THE delay in getting an acceptable coal code, which did more than anything else to impair public confidence in the Administration and to encourage recalcitrance among bankers and industrialists, was partly Johnson's fault. Despite all the talk about his being "hard-boiled" and "two-fisted," he is, in fact, one of the most patient men who ever trod shoe leather. In the case of the coal men he was entirely too patient. Some of them were encouraged to engage in a deliberate campaign of delay. Meantime they rushed production to capacity, and great industrial consumers such as railroads and power companies piled up huge winter stocks of coal mined at starvation wages. Consequently, when the code goes into effect, with its higher wages and shorter hours, a heavy percentage of the miners will be laid off—and that on the very eve of cold weather. The men realized the trick was being worked at their expense, and that knowledge was responsible for the strikes and accompanying disorders in Pennsylvania. During this time John Lewis, who had patriotically appealed to the miners six weeks ago to remain on the job, promising them there would be a coal code in three weeks at the most, was being subjected to unmerciful punishment within his own organization. It is a marvel and a lasting tribute to his character and vision that he did not throw up the sponge and call a national coal strike. The prolonged bickering over coal and oil has served one useful purpose—it has demonstrated beyond peradventure that the only permanent solution of the problems of those industries is to nationalize them. By no other method will the federal government ever put a permanent end to the overdevelopment, overmanning, and undermanaging which plague them. Even under a code of fair practice, coal, in the words of the inimitable Alexander Sachs, probably will continue to exist "as an economic zombie, perpetually doomed to toil for other and competing fuels, without profit to itself."

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IN view of certain questions that have been raised about the friendliness of the National Labor Board toward labor, it is a pleasure to report that the first formal decision of the board constituted a sweeping victory for the workers involved, and that it left no doubt of the board's determination to enforce the exact language of the collective-bargaining section of the recovery act. The case involved a West Virginia textile manufacturer who had discharged seven employees for joining the textile workers' union, and who informed a committee of workers that he would deal with no one not in his employ. After a hearing the board held that he had violated both the code and the recovery act, and thus was subject to prosecution under both the recovery act and the anti-trust laws. It directed him to reinstate the discharged employees without discrimination and to deal with any representative chosen by his employees. The decision was unanimous, among those participating being Walter Teagle, Gerard Swope, and Louis Kerstein—large employers of labor on whose good faith some doubt had been cast. As I happen to know, these three men have stood up to their job under severe pressure from outside—some of it from their own customers. They have been accused by other employers of "selling out the country to organized labor," and of "failing to protect the interests of their own class." It required plenty of manhood to resist the heat which has been turned on them, and honest men everywhere should honor them for it.

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SPEAKING of heat being turned on NRA officials, it is interesting to note that its origin coincided precisely in time with the recent meeting of the National Manufacturers' Association. Since that event employers and chambers of commerce throughout the country have been bombarded with letters instructing them to insist on certain provisions in their respective codes. Without exception these suggested provisions are carefully designed to qualify or restrict the collective-bargaining section of the act. This campaign became much more active after the resignation of Dudley C. Cates as industrial adviser to the NRA. Cates, whom Johnson generously permitted to resign instead of throwing him out on his ear, as most employers would have done, had almost succeeded in demoralizing the organization before he got out. Since then he has been endeavoring—thus far without success—to peddle a series of syndicated articles about the NRA, and it has even been reported that he might head a

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movement in open opposition. Henry Ford is acting just as I forecast in this place, and his attitude is influencing others. A few months ago business was so frightened over the bank holiday that it was willing to go along with almost any program. But in certain spots its old cockiness is returning. A lot of lawyers are hastening to give advice through which they hope to create new cases—and fees. The newspaper publishers are still up to their tricks: I venture to say that very few readers are aware that unions of editorial workers have been organized in Philadelphia, Camden, and Cleveland, although if that happened in any other group of workers it certainly would be news, and failure to publish it would be called deliberate suppression. Even so, I suspect the publishers will encounter some unpleasant surprises when their hearing is held.

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SENTIMENT for some form of monetary inflation is growing so rapidly that it is hard to see how the Administration can withstand it much longer. It arises largely from the failure of farm prices to keep pace with the prices of those things which the farmer buys, and hence its leading advocates are from the agricultural States—although there are some notable exceptions. Inflation undoubtedly would accelerate the rise in farm prices, but it seems reasonable to conclude that it would produce a corresponding rise in other prices, and hence it is not exactly clear how the farmer's condition would be eased. It is no longer possible to doubt, however, that a vast number of farmers and a large majority of their representatives in Congress are convinced that it would help them, and they are clamoring for it accordingly. Unless Roosevelt makes some substantial gesture in that direction before January, it appears likely that Congress will make the present permissive inflationary measures mandatory. The President, in fact, is not going to have any honeymoon during the next session of Congress. Dozens of Senators are hopping mad over patronage, and it can hardly be said that Jim Farley has distinguished himself in choosing appointees. Moreover, a lot of Congressmen have had their toes stepped on down at NRA headquarters and are gunning for Johnson. Stormy weather ahead, mates, and plenty of it.

The Actor and the Depression

By ROBERT MIDDLEMASS

WHEN an actor has a job he is an actor—when he is "laying off" he is nothing. If anyone retorts that some stage folk, when not playing parts, are able to earn money by selling real estate or bonds or teaching contract bridge, I shall point out that I am talking about actors and not about part-time performers, manicurists, barbers, or society girls who may occasionally appear on the stage. I am considering the large number of persons—about 30,000 in October, 1929—who make their living by performing on the speaking stage, and I shall seek to convey how the depression has affected them. In this group of 30,000 people are included not only those employed in the so-called legitimate theater but also those in stock companies, vaudeville, and tent and burlesque shows. The stock companies, playing legitimate plays, have always been the proving grounds where the New York managers looked for new dramatic talent, and from vaudeville and burlesque it has been but a step to Broadway musical comedy. Florence Reed, Katharine Cornell, Frank Morgan, Fay Bainter, Alfred Lunt, Marjorie Rambeau, Ed Wynn, Clark and McCullough, Otto Kruger, Joe Cook, Eddie Cantor—to mention only a few—came to Broadway by one of these routes. There has been no barrier between stock, burlesque, and vaudeville and the narrow domain of the legitimate theater. George M. Cohan got his early training in the old variety theaters—the vaudeville of that day. In short, I am using the word actor to denote all those people—both men and women—who perform in person in theaters.

That actors are at present in great distress is beyond question. The Actors' Dinner Club, according to its president, Bessie Beatty, is "nightly serving 300 free dinners to unemployed actors"; the Friars Club and the Lambs, in default of dues from their members, are in a sorry plight. The Friars has already passed into the hands of a receiver and the future of the Lambs is most uncertain. The Players, because of the generous bequest of its founder, Edwin Booth, is apparently able to ride out the storm. Actors have always tried to care for their own needy; they are doing this now, but every relief agency is strained to the limit. The Actors' Fund Home, the Percy Williams Home, and the Edwin Forrest Home are caring for the aged; the N. V. A. at Saranac Lake is caring for those in ill health; the Actors' Dinner Club dispenses food either free or for a nominal charge; the Stage Relief Fund provides shelter, food, and clothing; the Actors' Fund expends about $200,000 annually in helping the sick, the aged, and the destitute; the Actors' Equity and the various social and religious groups, though not formed primarily for charitable purposes, are doing their bit. The amount of relief needed is indicated by the 70 per cent decline in paid-up memberships in the Actors' Equity Association. Those who still hold paid-up cards are by no means regularly employed, and their salaries have been reduced from 50 to 90 per cent.

In New York City last season two-thirds of the legitimate theaters were closed most of the time. Outside New York it was worse—there were no one-night stands at all, and the theaters in the larger cities kept open only a few weeks during the entire year. Big-time vaudeville, formerly employing thousands of actors, had already passed out of the picture. In 1927 there were 165 permanent stock companies; last season there were 30. Tent shows had decreased in number from more than 300 to fewer than 40. The old burlesque "wheels" gave up the ghost several years ago, to be supplanted by the present-day resident company in which the "strippers" play hide and seek with the police.

All this indicates unemployment and hardship, but it would not be accurate to say that this state of affairs is caused entirely by the depression. We think of November,

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1929, as the starting-point of disaster, but long before this the theater was in trouble and actors were not altogether happy. Many things were wrong, but perhaps the gradual decay of the road—the very backbone of the theater—was the chief symptom of ill health. What caused the decay of the road requires more space than I have at my disposal here. Although the road was dying during the years of the big bull market, theatrical conditions in the big cities were far from bad, as a list of plays then current will perhaps show: for example, "Broadway," "Coquette" with Helen Hayes, "The Jest" with the Barrymores, "Rain" with Jeanne Eagels, "What Price Glory," "The Green Hat" with Katharine Cornell, "Strange Interlude," "Burlesque," "The Butter and Egg Man" with Gregory Kelly, "The Shanghai Gesture" with Florence Reed, "The Royal Family," "Street Scene," "Gambling" with George Cohan, "New Moon," "Rose Marie," "Journey's End," "The Trial of Mary Dugan," "Rio Rita," "Candida" with Peggy Wood, and "The First Year" with Frank Craven. The point I am trying to make is that although all was not well, the years just preceding the depression were theatrically far from barren. Perhaps it is close to the truth to say that the depression has intensified many times the troubles and evils that existed in the theater five years ago. And the actor has suffered accordingly, as have also other workers in the theater. Everybody has been hit—managers, authors, musicians, stage hands, right down the line to the stage-door man. But I have been asked to write about actors.

The acting profession has always been a precarious one. Previous to 1919, when the Equity contract now universally used came into existence, the actor faced many more uncertainties than he does now. When he put his name to one of the old-time contracts he practically signed his life away and was utterly at the mercy of irresponsible or dishonest promoters. In 1914, between June and December, I was left stranded three times. The manager in each case skipped out leaving his company unpaid for past performances and for transportation back to New York. Let me say parenthetically that one manager who skipped town with the week's receipts and abandoned the company in Atlanta is now a prominent member of the Actors' Equity Association and loudly raises her voice from time to time in condemnation of managerial villainies. It has always seemed to me that between rascality and honesty in the theater is a line of cleavage that is about as straight as a streak of forked lightning. Very seldom is a company stranded these days and contracts are generally lived up to, but even so, acting is still seasonal and irregular. However, during the Harding-Coolidge boom days actors were not faring badly. Most of them could reasonably expect to work from twenty to thirty weeks a year, and since the passing of the old road tours this has been considered satisfactory. Salaries were good—in some instances large. Dues in the Friars, the Players, the Lambs, and Equity were regularly paid; homes were bought; insurance premiums were paid in; and actors purchased such "investments" as Straus bonds and Insull stocks.

Then came the depression. As in every other business receipts fell off steadily, production was cut down, and workers were either thrown out or retained at reduced pay. I have already spoken of the closed theaters all over the country. To this let me now add something about the receipts of those few that have struggled to keep open. In 1928 it was not unusual for a Scandals, a Vanities, or a Follies to take in $35,000 a week. Little more than half this sum was considered excellent business for musical shows last season. Before the depression dramatic plays had to do $15,000 a week to be rated in the hit class. The contract between the theater-owner and the play-producer usually contained a "stop clause" specifying that if the play should fail to gross $12,000 a week for two succeeding weeks it would have to vacate the theater. Last season, theater-owners, with a liability instead of an asset on their hands, were glad to get plays on any terms. Most of the non-musical plays last season staggered along on grosses of $5,000 a week or less—some on considerably less. One play actually took in only eighty cents at an evening performance.

This situation forced the manager either to go out of business or to reduce expenses. If he went out of business it meant so much less employment, and if he reduced expenses it was the actor who suffered most. In saying this I am fully aware that press agents, theater treasurers, even ushers and doormen have been working for less than they formerly received, that authors have waived royalty payments, and that managers have kept plays on week after week without a penny of profit. The author and manager can afford to mark time during the run of a play in the hope that profits will appear later in the form of a talking-picture sale or from rentals to stock companies and little-theater groups. The actor does not participate in these profits.

The musicians and the stage hands, with their stern organizations, are the groups in the theater that have suffered least from the depression. Their wage scale has been reduced only slightly; in the case of the stage hands the heads of departments now receive $75 per week instead of the former $82.50 and others have had correspondingly slight cuts, but the strict rules governing their employment are as comprehensive as ever. The item of expense represented by union labor in the theater is a fixed charge that since the depression has become more and more of a burden to the manager. Every manager to whom I have spoken says the same thing—that the union wage scale, though high for semi-skilled labor, can be met, but it is the rules that make the cost of union labor an incubus, and out of all proportion to other costs. These rules are arbitrary and inflexible and practically take the mechanical end of a production out of the manager's hands. Regardless of the amount of work, the rules dictate the number of men that a manager must employ.

Several years ago, for instance, the manager of the theater in Chicago where "The Trial of Mary Dugan" was playing complained bitterly of the union requirements. There was only one set in this play and the curtain was not used at all—in fact, there was not enough work to keep three scene-shifters busy—yet the union required him to employ twelve. Last season a play was produced in which a stage radio was used. This was operated off stage by one of the actors. It had to be operated by this particular actor because he spoke lines into the radio that bore a definite relation to the lines that were being spoken on the stage. Inasmuch as the apparatus was electrically equipped, the manager was obliged to hire an extra stage hand who did nothing but report to the theater and draw his pay. This man's pay amounted to about 7 per cent of the gross receipts. Two years ago Miss Mary Hart had an excellent stock company in St. Louis. For her production of "Lysistrata" she rented

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the scenery that had been used by the original New York company. The union ruled that this made her stock company a road show and that consequently three men must go to St. Louis with the scenery. As the train on which they traveled took twenty-four hours and fifteen minutes to make the trip, Miss Hart had to give them two days' pay before they even reached her theater. Some of the rules are not far from being funny. Suppose, for example, that Brock Pemberton should arrange with Sam Harris to transfer a play from the Avon Theater to the Music Box. The stage doors of these theaters are only a few feet apart and it would seem sensible simply to carry the scenery along the street from one place to the other. The union, however, would not permit this. Mr. Pemberton would have to pay for the services of a transfer crew who would load the scenery on trucks in front of the Avon, then ride around the block and deposit the load at the Music Box only a few steps away.

Such instances could be multiplied indefinitely. The rules for the musicians are similarly rigid. Union labor can point out that in the days of great profit in the theater its members were not paid more than the minimum, that each rule is merely the answer to some old-time abuse, that if they now give an inch they will sooner or later have to yield an ell; and it is a dull mind that cannot grasp the content of justice in these arguments. But the fact remains that the manager, in his desperate effort to keep his play going, has received almost no concessions from the unions. The actor has made many concessions. The musicians and the stage hands will not and so the actor must. In the conflict of capital and labor the actor—like many others in the white-collar class—is crushed between them. The public, with its buying power reduced to almost nothing, can hardly be blamed for giving up a luxury like the theater; the manager, with bankruptcy just around the corner, cannot be blamed for trying to reduce expenses; and union labor cannot be blamed for wanting to maintain its hard-won economic position. Nevertheless, all this does not ameliorate the tragic plight of thousands of actors—including some whose names once glittered in lights on Broadway—who are destitute and of thousands of others who are living from hand to mouth.

[*This is the seventh of a series on the economic crisis and the professions. The eighth, on the trained nurse, by Carolyn C. Van Blarcom, will appear in the issue of October 11.*]

Honest Life Insurance

The Massachusetts Plan

By WILLIAM L. GROSSMAN

TWENTY-SIX years ago, as the result of one of the most bitter and extended fights ever seen on Beacon Hill, Massachusetts enacted a law which in the best of possible worlds would have started a new era in the history of life insurance. The experiment sanctioned by the Massachusetts law has been eminently successful, and has been widely publicized and discussed. Yet with all its success and recognition, it has had no imitators in other States. Every attempt to enact similar legislation elsewhere has failed. The reasons invite inquiry.

The Armstrong Committee's investigation of 1905 had uncovered, among other things, the fearful waste in the administration of life insurance. As a result of the investigation Louis D. Brandeis—not yet one of the famous two whom the late Justice Hough was pleased to call the "Bostonian twins of dissent"—had been retained as attorney by the New England policy-holders of the Equitable Life Assurance Society. After a thorough survey he concluded that only radical changes in the fundamental principles of life-insurance administration could achieve the desideratum of cheap insurance for persons of moderate means. The chief causes of high-priced life insurance—except for speculation and crooked management, both of which have largely disappeared—were and have always been the elaborate machinery for investments and, still more important, selling expenses, especially the tremendous commissions paid to agents. Other evils were, and still are, inherent in the practice of insurance salesmanship, especially when the buyer is a wage-earner of small means. In Mr. Brandeis's words:

> The sacrifice incident to the present industrial insurance can be avoided only by providing an institution for insurance which will recognize that its function is not to induce working people to take insurance regardless of whether they really want it or can afford it, but rather to supply insurance upon proper terms to those who do want it and can carry it—an institution which will recognize that the best method of increasing the demand for life insurance is not eloquent, persistent persuasion but, as in the case of other necessities of life, is to furnish a good article at a low price.

Before long Mr. Brandeis evolved a plan to diminish the expense involved in investment and salesmanship and to do away with the other evils inherent in selling insurance. The plan was simple enough in outline. Mutual savings banks, after complying with certain requirements to protect the persons to be insured, were to become insurers, aided and supervised by the commonwealth, and were to sell small life-insurance policies at actual cost without remuneration of any kind to selling agents. No personal solicitation of business was to be permitted. Banks that did not actually become insurers might, if they chose (and over a hundred have already so chosen), act as over-the-counter agencies for the sale of policies in the insurance banks, but were to receive no profit other than the increased business which might incidentally accrue to them.

The plan was greeted with loud guffaws on the part of private and mutual insurance carriers and agents. They repeated the old saw that "life insurance is sold and not bought," and prophesied immediate failure for the proposed experiment. But if the thing was so clearly impractical, it is difficult to account for the tremendous fight which the private companies put up against it. Why should they oppose legislation which could have no effect other than to cost the

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commonwealth a few dollars, disappoint a few private citizens, and show the soundness and strength of the private carriers by comparison with the ineffectiveness of savings-bank insurance?

Yet a powerful lobby arose in opposition. Haley Fiske, who was then vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, no doubt keenly desirous of preventing the Massachusetts legislature from doing anything foolish, came all the way from New York to explain to the insurance committee that the proposed system could not last two years. Frederick L. Hoffman of the Prudential Life Insurance Company, an expert statistician, unselfishly contributed the benefit of his long experience. In view of the quarter-century of striking success which Massachusetts savings-bank life insurance has just completed, Dr. Hoffman's prediction—made in 1907—has only the antiquarian merit of quaintness: "One might as well attempt to run a car by animal power over a system of electric traction in the hope of developing a better transportation system as to attempt to run a savings bank in connection with an insurance company." Everywhere insurance men laughed the innovation out of court. The *Insurance Post* (February 2, 1907) announced that "nobody need lose any sleep over the dream of the Boston theorists, for the dream has about one chance in a million of coming true . . . the savings-bank insurance-while-you-wait plan is as chimerical as perpetual motion."

The struggle lasted over six months. Labor unions favored the bill. The Massachusetts League for Savings Bank Life Insurance came into being. Mr. Brandeis spoke every few days. Petitions and thousands of letters poured in. The opposition meanwhile never let up; the lobby used every possible weapon, even going so far as to intimate that the whole thing was out-and-out socialism. But on June 26, 1907, the bill became a law. Perhaps the last straw had been the appearance before the legislature of Harvard's liberal president, Charles W. Eliot, to speak in favor of the bill.

Despite the forebodings of those selfish interests that had sought to prevent its adoption, the experiment has been eminently successful. The savings banks offer the cheapest life insurance in the United States, and although no person can take out more than $21,000 of such insurance—$1,000 in each of the twenty-one banks which are permitted to issue policies—the system has over $90,000,000 of insurance in force. It is hard to understand how anyone who looked at the matter without prejudice could have failed to see that the savings banks would undersell private carriers by a large margin. To begin with, the life-insurance agent is a highly skilled artist and commands a commission commensurate with his skill. Commission rates vary, but in representative companies the commission amounts to 50 per cent (some pay over 60 per cent) of the first annual premium and 5 per cent of the next nine annual premiums. In other words, approximately a full year's premium goes to the agent who sells the policy. Besides, many companies maintain general sales agencies. Naturally, the commission and other sales costs are a charge on the person insured. Take away the commission and you deflate the premium. The savings-bank life-insurance system has taken away the commission by eliminating the agent, and its premiums have therefore of necessity been smaller than those of private companies.

An additional source of saving has kept the premiums remarkably low. Private companies must establish special departments for the investment of their assets, and these departments are expensive to maintain. Savings banks, however, are not novices at the art of investment. For them it is an old story. Their machinery, well regulated by the State, is ready, and the additional expense is relatively small. Perhaps an additional reason why savings-bank policies can be sold so cheaply—and this may have been a factor in inducing Haley Fiske to address the Massachusetts lawmakers—is that no one receives any fabulous salary for administering the funds. There are no quarter-million-dollar salaries or anything of the sort in State-supervised savings-bank insurance.

It required no expert, then, to predict that the new system would result in cheaper insurance. The savings banks in Massachusetts are fairly bursting with impressive statistics. But one need only consult the standard manuals to see that the savings banks sell by a phenomenal margin the cheapest life insurance in the State. It would be arbitrary to select any particular company for comparison; but to say that the average difference between the cost of insurance in savings banks and in private companies is 25 per cent is to be more than generous to the private companies. At the same time the actuarial soundness of the system is beyond dispute. The ease with which, although a young organization, it has breezed through the hardest years of epidemic and financial panic in insurance history, amply demonstrates its practical security.

When we turn to that bugaboo of life-insurance statistics, lapsed policies, the difference between the savings banks and private carriers assumes gigantic proportions. In the event that a person whose life is insured does not continue to pay premiums he is ordinarily entitled to receive a sum of money from the insurance company varying with the number of years the policy has been in force and representing roughly so much of the premiums paid—and not returned in dividends—as is not needed to defray the company's expenses and to pay a proportionate part of the money needed by the company for death claims. This "cash-surrender value," which constitutes an important attraction for selling agents to dwell upon, is payable under almost all life-insurance policies, but generally with the express stipulation that it shall not accrue until after two or three years' (in a very few companies, one year's) premiums have been paid. This means that if the person insured, after paying premiums for eighteen months, should lose his job or realize that he bought more insurance than he can possibly maintain and should have to discontinue the payments, he would lose all that he had paid in. This occurs more often than the companies care to talk about, and unfortunately is one of the points which the agents in their sales patter rarely discuss. In many cases such a lapse of a policy means great hardship to the impoverished policy-holder, but as the companies point out, it is in large part unavoidable. Before paying any surrender sum the company must naturally recover, in addition to other expenses, the tremendous expense incurred in *selling* the insurance. This expense is not diffused throughout the period of the policy but accrues in a lump at the very beginning. The agent's original commission must be paid by the company, whether the policy later lapses or not. Accordingly, if the companies paid surrender values after only a few months' premiums had been paid, they would actually lose money on the transactions. Eliminate the commissions, and

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the surrender value can accrue almost immediately upon the issuance of a policy. The insured person may then rest secure, knowing that if at any time he cannot continue to pay he can recover all the money which he has already paid except so much as actually represents the value of the insurance which he has enjoyed.

All this is obviously correct mathematically, and the savings banks in Massachusetts have proved that it is also correct in experience. They grant surrender values after only six months' premiums have been paid, with the result that they have practically eliminated lapses. In 1931, the worst year the companies had so far known, the ratio of lapsed policies to newly issued policies in the savings banks was 1.24 per cent. Now, the most popular type of life insurance for workmen and other persons of limited means has been weekly-premium, sometimes called "industrial," insurance; and by the report of the Commissioner of Insurance the lapse ratio, as computed above, on such policies for companies doing business in Massachusetts was in that year 76.18 per cent. Over 7,000,000 poor devils had to discontinue their policies and take a dead loss. For ordinary policies the ratio was 35.61 per cent. In 1932, while the lapse ratio for the savings-bank policies rose only to 2.63 per cent, the ratio on industrial policies was 107.5 per cent—that is, the number of lapsed policies actually exceeded the number of newly issued policies. These figures, transcribed into units of human misery, strike home with a tragic intensity, and give some indication of the relief which Mr. Brandeis's innovation, if more widely adopted, might effect.

Even the private companies have finally recognized the success of savings-bank life insurance, if one may judge by the sincere efforts they make to do away with it. One of their chief objections is that the commonwealth has paid a part of the expenses of the system. The actual contribution by the commonwealth has not been large; and now that the system is securely on its feet, recent legislation makes it henceforth altogether self-supporting. To many persons the fact that the State has helped the banks a little will hardly appear objectionable if the result has been the relief of hardship and the supplying of a virtual necessity to poor people at low cost.

One of the most interesting truths which savings-bank life insurance has brought to light is that there are many thousands of workmen with sufficient understanding and foresight to buy life insurance without expert salesmen to cram it, often in indigestibly large pieces, down their throats. Not, of course, that publicity has been altogether dispensed with. The system employs two "instructors" to speak to groups of workmen about the advantages of the insurance, but these instructors receive no commissions of any sort and can hardly be called solicitors. The critics who reckoned that no one would buy life insurance except under intense sales pressure underestimated the intelligence of the ordinary workman. The savings banks have already over 100,000 policies in force.

How can we account for the fact that other States have not taken the cue and imitated the Massachusetts plan? Mutual savings banks exist in seventeen States, among them New York, and many of these banks would no doubt welcome the opportunity to sell life insurance, not merely for the sake of the insurance business itself but because, as the Massachusetts banks have discovered, people who start as purchasers of insurance often become regular savings depositors. As a matter of fact, bills inspired by the Massachusetts law have been introduced in several State legislatures, but they have never got very far. One was introduced in New York last year and did not come out of committee. Most proposed legislation presents moot questions, arguable pro and con; but here, if anywhere, is a practicable innovation so obviously beneficial that there can hardly be anything to debate. As we have shown, its theoretical soundness is a matter of simple arithmetic. Indeed, the idea has gone beyond the stage of theory: it has been put in practice with most substantial results.

Can it be that the various legislatures have felt the influence of the powerful private companies and their formidable lobbies? That influence, as Mr. Brandeis proved, is not an insurmountable obstacle. Speaking of a Rhode Island savings-bank life-insurance bill, former Bank Commissioner Goodwin explained that "it got no farther than the committee. Probably it had no good pusher, for I know from my own experience that unless a bill has a good pusher behind it, it will not go through the mill and come out as desired." With the present decline of the superstition against government interference in business, "pushers" may be expected to arise. Even without the genius of a Brandeis, they may successfully champion the cause of savings-bank life insurance by pointing to the history of the system in Massachusetts. Surely the success of the measure there reveals its opponents in the unsavory light of selfish, greedy, and anti-social obstructionists.

Germany Prepares for War

By ERNEST SCHULZ

WHATEVER the ostensible purpose of the decrees, rules, and regulations so far promulgated by the Hitler Government, they are actually all designed to furnish a foundation for achieving the final goal of the National Socialists—restoration of the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic race and its far-flung border lines, along which Barbarossa's stalwart crusaders converged a thousand years ago. Everywhere in Germany unmistakable signs of tentative war preparations meet the eye of the casual observer. On Berlin's great thoroughfare, the Kurfürstendamm, with its innumerable cafes, exclusive shops, and hurrying crowds, one instinctively senses an atmosphere of expectation and anxiety, buoyancy and premonition. The contrast between the self-conscious, straddling soldiery and the slinking, self-effacing burghers is striking. Shining blue eyes glowing with Hitler fanaticism grow somber and dark when they exchange scowling looks with unfortunate non-Nazis. Brown uniforms, black ones, men of the Steel Helmet garbed in gray, Reichswehr service denims, sailor suits, the Hitlerite youth in khaki and smooth-shaven Schupos in their snugly fitting Prussian blue rub elbows with the hapless plain citizen. Boots, boots, marching up and down. The whole city seems like an armed camp. And the air is tense and dramatic. Non-Nazis shrink from contact with the marching Huns. Again and again I have observed citizens weaving in and out, picking their way skilfully between ruthless

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hordes of soldiery. The burgher has become adept in the art of dodging. For well he knows that the slightest jostling, unintentioned though it may be, will cause an outbreak of the storm trooper's ruffled feelings and may result in an offending citizen's arrest and a ride to a concentration camp. I never lost the feeling that the non-Nazis were on a platter, ready to be served up to the Hitler Moloch. Many shared my opinion.

If the uniformed men and boys that dominate the Kurfürstendamm do not come under the heading of soldiers, I do not know what a soldier looks like. They drill on their own training grounds, march with war-time kits on their backs, spend their allotted time at target practice, and receive instructions in servicing machine-guns. I was told that intensive machine-gun training was being given to special Nazi shock troops at their headquarters near the Turm-und-Stromstrasse, Moabit, Berlin. I have it from an unimpeachable source that dies and models for vastly improved machine-guns, ready to be turned out in series overnight, are kept there for study and practice. Motorized machine-gun squads nightly speed through dimly lit suburban Berlin. The ex-crown prince, by the way, is a full-fledged member of such a squad.

Nazi airplanes furrow Munich's star-spangled sky in perfect V formation. For a fifteen-minute flight over Berlin in one of the commercial Hansa planes I invested the sum of five marks, just to get a look at the plane's revolving chairs. To unscrew the seat, raise it from its platform, and plant a machine-gun in its place is the work of two minutes. And there are hundreds of Hansa planes, the latest models equipped for fast flight and swift getaways. That the airplane traffic routes in western Germany converge along the French and Belgian borders, with but a few scheduled lines running east and south, goes without saying. Bomb- and gas-proof dug-outs and cellars designed as havens of refuge from air attacks, weekly alarms calling gas-masked men, women, and children to their appointed stations—these tell only half the story.

Meanwhile the Heilsberg triangle in East Prussia is lined with miles of subterranean passages built of steel and concrete, equipped for swift concentration of thousands of men, either for defense or attack. These men, like all the other brown- and black-shirted citizens of the Third Reich, bear arms, meaning guns, openly or in their hip pockets; and I take this opportunity of giving the lie to the German government for its denial of this fact. Time and again I have sat with Nazi storm troopers at Zuntz's cafe in the Tauentzienstrasse, at Quick's restaurant in the Joachimsthalerstrasse, at Cafe Uhlandseck, at Kranzler's, and at dozens of other places, and watched them adjust their guns or make sure of the safety catch. They were not of the auxiliary police either, but plain S.A. and S.S. men (storm troopers, protection squads), and they made no bones about it. The explanation given in some quarters that what I took for revolvers were nothing but toy guns (*Schreckpistolen*) is preposterous. In addition, some of the troopers sport a business-like dagger or a dangling cutlass clumsily sheathed. Plenty of use has been made of the storm troopers' arms—in street encounters or on those occasions when they are called upon to "shoot up" their opponents' places, cowboy fashion.

I have indicated that very few airplane routes lead across the Alps to Rome, but it is an open secret that additional highways of the air have been lately established. Germany's fastest craft ply between Berlin and Rome, and high-ranking Nazi leaders come and go, although the visits appear to be one-sided. It would be stretching credulity a bit too far to believe that lower rates and quicker shipments of early spring produce, southern fruit, and spaghetti keep the minds of Göring and Goebbels occupied. Theirs is a twofold purpose. Beginners who had never held office before, political amateurs of the first water though proficient killers, they have a great deal to learn. Partly based on certain internal elements common to both countries, Germany's sudden friendship for Italy must be taken also as an indication that her rulers are aware of the political isolation in which she finds herself, a fact which weighs heavily upon the Berlin conspirators. The hunger blockade is still in their bones. Italy offers an outlet to the sea and to Africa's immense reservoirs; last but not least, Italy is to furnish the heavy artillery which Germany entirely lacks. Germany argues that as long as private manufacture and sale of arms are unrestricted, governments can do nothing to prevent any nation from arming. That Italy has her hands full with France and that a powerful neighbor in the north would be the last thing Mussolini desires have been left out of the calculations of Teuton diplomacy.

A million storm troopers eager for combat are receiving military training and learning how to shoot. The Hitlerite youth is hiking, marching, living in camps, soldier fashion. Public-school textbooks, meetings, open-air protests, torch-light processions, the film, the theater, the military spirit of Spandau, Frederick the Great—they all mean but one thing. Heels clicking, men stand at attention as of yore. The monocle has come back to its own. It was the monocled, smooth-shaven, saber-smitten face of a former captain of the imperial army that pondered my question, "What do you want?" at Cafe König, Unter den Linden.

"Well," he finally burst out, "a strong army and navy, an airplane force second to none, the Polish corridor, Polish Silesia, Danzig, the return of our former colonies, Anschluss with Austria, by force if necessary."

"And if you do not get what you want?" I ventured to ask.

"War, war to the hilt."

"What about another two million dead, maimed, and orphaned?"

"What about it?" was his razor-sharp reply. "It will have been well worth the price if we win, and win we shall this time."

The Logic of the Rose

By LANCELOT DENT

Consider the sweet mystery of the rose,
How reasonably its petals presuppose
The limpid universals it selects,
Repelling all the others it rejects
So timelessly, till come untimely shears.
It is the perfect thing that it appears,
Yet holding undissolved for God to see
Its own precise particularity.

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In the Driftway

THE sidewalk cafe, that picturesque and delightful institution of numerous foreign cities, blossomed in New York this last summer, but may or may not bloom again next spring. Whence came the inspiration for the sidewalk cafe, the Drifter does not know. It appeared unheralded one day in front of the old French Hotel Brevoort on lower Fifth Avenue. That the sidewalk cafe should flower first in Greenwich Village was in keeping with tradition, and in spite of obvious obstacles, the idea met with immediate favor and the sidewalk cafe spread all over the neighborhood. At best it didn't have much soil in which to grow. It could encroach upon the sidewalk hardly more than six feet at most, and in the circumstances there was no way in which to protect it adequately from a too strident sun. But though it was not always inviting in the heat of the day, it became so in the late afternoon and evening.

* * * * *

THEN came a cold wind of official disapproval. The introduction of the sidewalk cafe was possible only because of a city law which permits property owners to put certain constructions, usually flights of steps, beyond the building line, provided that there is no interference with traffic. Such extensions exist only on sufferance and must be removed at any time if the city decides that they are encumbrances. Recently somebody—the identity is undisclosed—protested against the sidewalk cafes of lower Fifth Avenue, and the city decreed that they must go. Now sidewalk cafes on Fifth Avenue between Twenty-third Street and Central Park clearly would obstruct traffic, but it is equally certain that they are no sensible impediment to the much smaller stream of pedestrians on the lower stretches of the thoroughfare. Fortunately, a citizens' committee was organized to defend the sidewalk cafe, and its fate is now in the balance.

* * * * *

IF not on Fifth Avenue, the sidewalk cafe is certainly entitled to live on other streets, and the Drifter hopes to see it flourish in New York and spread to other cities. Although new New Yorkers do not know it, the sidewalk cafe existed in true European style years ago on lower Second Avenue, the center of the Austrian and Hungarian quarter. The sidewalk cafe then was on private property and was a delightful replica of the institution developed in Vienna and Budapest—even to the quiet chess games on the tables in the evenings. No, it wasn't prohibition which killed the sidewalk cafes of Second Avenue, although it probably would have done so had they survived until its arrival. The city decided to widen the street, and the space occupied by the sidewalk cafes was condemned and added to the thoroughfare.

* * * * *

WITH the return of legal beer, and the total end of prohibition near, the Drifter foresees a great possibility of saner drinking habits in America. In many of the new places which are opening for the sale of beer a special attempt has been made to get away from the pre-prohibition saloon. In some instances there is a brave if only approximate reproduction of the old-time ale house. The Drifter thinks that the sidewalk cafe fits into this scheme as part of an effort to make the modern drinking place not a sordid hole in which to get drunk but a social rendezvous where both sexes may gather to sip and munch and talk in leisurely and self-respecting fashion. The Drifter surmises that the era of the "wild party" is about over. Intelligent persons are not much longer going to gather for the evening, depending for their chief intellectual stimulus on gin imbibed in such quantities that half the guests "pass out" about midnight. If, as a consequence of the travail of prohibition, we can learn to do our drinking as wisely and happily as they do in many foreign countries, especially those of the Latin peoples, then the "noble experiment" will have been worth all that we went through on its account.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Electrical Distribution

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Electricity distributes itself. If you don't believe this, dear reader, just go down in your basement and grab hold of a couple of bare wires. How did the electricity get there? It's very simple. The dynamo was running in the power house, and the "juice" distributed itself over all the lines which make up the distributing system, including those that the power company had run to your house; and when you grabbed those bare wires in the basement some of the electricity distributed itself through your body. Well, you ask, if electricity distributes itself, whence comes all that distribution cost that makes my bills so high? Most of it goes to pay rent for the money the power company spent, or claims to have spent, for the poles, wires, transformers, and meters used in the distribution of power to you and your neighbors and the rest of the citizens in your community.

You have some of this same kind of distribution expense in your own home. You probably spent $100 for wiring your house so that the "juice" could distribute itself to your lights, your sweeper, your washing machine, ironer, and electric refrigerator. You probably never thought of this, but you really should demand a "fair return" on this personal investment, say 8 or 10 per cent if you can get away with it. That is what the power company does with its investment in the wires and so forth that connect your wiring with the power house. If you are smart, you will claim a $200 or $300 valuation and carry it up to some accommodating public-utilities commission for approval.

In short, since New York financiers own the poles, transers, wires, and meters that make up the distributing system, you and your children and your children's children will have to keep on paying for what you will never own. In Ontario, across Lake Erie, the consumers own the poles, transformers, wires, and meters, and that is the principal reason why they get electricity for about one-third of what we have to pay on this side of the lake. They don't rent. They own.

How long will we stand for it? Just as long as we let ourselves be outsmarted by the power people, who spend millions in "educating" us and then add the costs of this education to our electric bills.

Cleveland, September 1 A. B. WALTON

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Salary Cuts and Dismissals

To the Editors of The Nation:

William Burl Thomas is to be commended for his courageous article on college instructors in your issue of August 23. He is quite right that in general college professors have stuck to their guns and pre-depression salaries, and have done so at the expense of the "small fry," who have been relegated to the ranks of the unemployed. And one of the saddest comments on the situation is that leaders in education like Robert M. Hutchins (see Hard Times and the Higher Learning in the summer issue of the *Yale Review*) feel obliged to make up reasons to justify such selfish practices. Mr. Hutchins frankly admits that the administrations of the three largest State universities would have preferred to cut their staffs instead of salaries, as the four largest endowed universities have done.

The figures that Mr. Thomas gives for Princeton, apparently supplied by the university itself, are incorrect. They show no dismissals and a cut in the budget, yet there have been no salary decreases—indeed, increases are permitted this year. The fact is that a number of young instructors have been dismissed from the Princeton faculty. A comparison of the present teaching staff with that for the school year 1930-31 would show a substantial decrease in number, yet Princeton is one of the few universities where the number of students has increased recently. The Big Three have been the worst offenders in this respect.

Princeton, N. J., September 10 A Princetonian

Biography of Josiah Strong

To the Editors of The Nation:

I am preparing a memorial biography of Dr. Josiah Strong, which I hope shortly to publish. It is the thought of the editor and the members of the advisory editorial board to make this biography, as far as feasible, a cooperative work on the part of Dr. Strong's friends. Consequently any letter from Dr. Strong which his friends may have in their possession, or other items of interest, or personal impressions which they may contribute concerning his life and work will be appreciated.

Each letter will be carefully read and returned, and all information will be properly appraised and credited.

Nathaniel M. Pratt

East Northfield, Mass., August 11

The Literary Editor of *The Nation* writes his first important book

Readers of *The Nation* will find, in *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Henry Hazlitt's new book, the equivalent of spending a charming evening around a fire discussing the functions of the critic, his problems and the relations of those problems to books and life.

In a witty and thoroughly modern trialogue, Mr. Young, Mr. Middleton and Mr. Elder, three critics representing three different generations and schools of thought, discuss the following topics: (and no punches are pulled)

The critic's function; literary standards; the verdict of posterity; realism versus romance; tradition and rebellion.

The growing class of American readers who in other days would have savored Sainte-Beuve and Matthew Arnold and the author's namesake, William Hazlitt—people who wish to enjoy books thoughtfully; in short—will discover many new twists to old problems in *The Anatomy of Criticism*. Price $2.50.

"A fresh and brilliant contribution to the endless discussion of criticism." —Ellen Glasgow

THE ANATOMY OF CRITICISM By HENRY HAZLITT

Simon and Schuster, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

The Next War

Rumors of war fill the European air. Fascism, with it fanatic, war-generating nationalism, is a rising flood that threatens to overrun the old world and even the new. The advent of Hitler, with his systematic attacks on all cultures and races that do not subscribe to his own crude religion, has given rise to a new and sinister crop of threats and counter-threats.

The governments of the world are preparing for the next war. The peoples of the world must prevent it. Knowledge is their best weapon. *The Nation* next week, in articles and reviews, will discuss among other things our own government's preparations for war and the steps that must be taken to prevent the final destruction of civilization and peace.

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Books, Drama, Films

A Man of Good-Will

Problèmes Européens. By Jules Romains. Paris: Ernest Flammarion. 12 francs.

LAST spring, when I reviewed the first volume of Romains's ambitious novel "Men of Good Will," I confessed that its social implications were not so clear to me as they were to some of the other reviewers—one of whom, indeed, went so far as to rebuke me in print for my lack of perception and to suggest that the central, very unpleasant character was practically a portrait of me and my kind. Naturally, therefore, I seized upon the present work, which the author has interpolated between instalments of his novel and which exists for the explicit purpose of expounding his social creed. In this plodding way I hoped to compensate for my lack of clairvoyance and to learn through reading what others had sensed, but I find instead that I am baffled again. M. Romains is not the vigorous left-winger which his enthusiastic champions had led me to expect. He is not a prophet of the imminent collapse of the bourgeois world. Instead, he reveals himself here as an anti-Marxian defender of the middle class, and as a Socialist of the gentlest, most old-fashioned sort.

The essays which compose the volume were written at various times from 1915 to the present, but they are primarily concerned with a single theme—the danger that Western civilization will perish in the struggle between the Communists on the one hand and the fascists on the other. M. Romains likes neither, but of the two he fears the fascists the more because he feels that they have the best chance of success. Three major revolutions have occurred since the end of the war, and there is no escaping the fact that two of them were fascist and that these two occurred in countries where conditions were much more like those in the rest of Europe than conditions in Russia ever were.

Marx, he thinks, made the fundamental error of assuming that the middle class would disappear by absorption into the proletariat. It has, on the contrary, grown steadily stronger, and the Marxians who persist blindly in perpetuating the error of their prophet doom themselves to failure. They stubbornly refuse to recognize the fact that their semi-mythical "bourgeoisie" holds the balance of power, and that the so-called proletarian wants to join the middle class even when he finds himself unable to do so. The plea of the Communists falls on deaf ears, because its premises are not the premises of the men to whom it is addressed. The promised land toward which the Communist looks is not the promised land for which his hearers have been hoping. They do not want to be happy workers participating in the "proletarian culture" imagined by the Russians. They want, instead, to lead the kind of life and enjoy the kind of pleasures which the bourgeoisie enjoys.

Fascism, on the other hand, is a middle-class movement. However fundamental the political changes which it proposes, it proposes them in the name of a social structure which it promises to save. The professional man and the merchant are not faced with any readjustment so complete as that which communism threatens. Fascism will recognize their function and their class. Fascism, in a word, promises to perpetuate the bourgeois world with which they are familiar, and as long as Marxism persists in speaking a language which even the actual proletariat cannot understand, it will make no headway against the psychologically sounder appeal of the fascist. The only function which its propaganda and its disorders can perform is the function of furnishing the counter-revolution with a convenient "menace," to be used, as it was used in Italy and Germany, to justify violence and to make fascism assume a peculiarly brutal form.

Speaking of the "science" of Marxism M. Romains asks:

> How do you explain the fact that not a single one of the theories contemporary with Marxism — whether it be a theory in physics, chemistry, biology, or astrophysics—remains valid today while Marxism continues to be so? How explain the fact that no one would dream of constructing a bridge, a locomotive, or a steamboat in accordance with the technique established under the Second Empire, while the Marxian technique for the construction of a society is considered by so many intelligent men to be still applicable, as a whole and as it is?

Russia may have created a going society on the basis of pure Marxian theory but that does not prove as much as it might seem to prove:

> Given a good deal of persistence and even of discernment, a society might succeed in constructing locomotives of the type used between Paris and Rouen during the Second Empire, and in taking care of tubercular patients in accordance with the ideas of Villemin. Undoubtedly such locomotives could run in 1933 with the air of being entirely new, and a certain number of sick men would be cured. But should we conclude that there was nothing to be discovered since the locomotive of the Paris-Rouen type or since the famous communication of Villemin to the Academy of Medicine? To prove that type of society is possible is not to prove very much.

M. Romains proposes, therefore, a rehabilitation of Socialist theory based upon a recognition of the power and the ideals of the middle class, and he proposes to begin, not with Marx, but with Jaurès. His opponents will probably object that his constructive ideas are somewhat vague. So, indeed, they are.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The Nazis in Power

Germany Enters the Third Reich. By Calvin B. Hoover. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

PROFESSOR HOOVER has done an admirable piece of work in this volume, which deserves the highest praise. No one who wishes a complete and a chronological story of the rise to power of Adolf Hitler can afford to be without this record of it. It is compact, yet the whole story is there, told in a spirit of detachment by one who was in Germany during the fateful winter of 1932-33 and witnessed its reversion to barbarism. Not that it is a colorless narrative—far from it. Professor Hoover lets it be known where he stands; he takes the position that every American who is loyal to our own institutions and believes in decency in human relations must take. Yet he gives all the commendation to Hitler that he can. That is not much. But he does aver that Hitler is far cleverer than most observers have given him credit for being. He thinks that Hitler has been superlatively Machiavellian in religiously promising certain actions or attitudes—as to the Nationalists when they entered the Cabinet—and then deliberately doing what he had always intended to do. Professor Hoover convicts Hitler of more than that; he affirms the truth of all that the American newspapers have printed concerning the atrocities and the terrorism of the Hitler regime, and then adds: "It was a fascinating though fearful thing to observe the growth of this atmosphere of terror." This terror, he says, "may be the negation of civilization. It may be that in the long run it destroys the individuals who wield it. But for a very long time it is an all-powerful weapon against which the

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man of honor who is subjected to it is singularly defenseless." To that terror he lays the failure of the opposition to put a single bar in the way of Hitler's capture of the government and his identification of its whole structure, and "every aspect of human life in Germany," with his party.

Indeed, this is a horrifying and depressing book as well as a brilliant one. For the record herein set forth of the ease with which a few ruthless, criminal-minded men can worm their way into a position in which they can make themselves complete masters of a country is no less than appalling. It renders government unsafe in any country, provided only that the criminals are brutal and ruthless enough. The Hitler crowd has tried to excuse its violence with the repeated statement, broadcast over the world, that "never before in history did a revolution occur with so little bloodshed." Professor Hoover punctures this defense with the simple statement:

> . . . it must be emphasized that there was no revolution at all in the sense of seizure of the state power against resistance from the armed forces of the state or from any other force. Von Papen had completed taking over the state without resistance in July, 1932, and had passed the state power on to Von Schleicher, who in turn had handed it over to Hitler. Consequently, the assaults which took place were against unarmed and unresisting individuals. . . . The extraordinary skill of Hitler in paralyzing the will to resist of his opponents had, strictly speaking, made all these acts of violence unnecessary except as a means of satisfying the blood lust of the S. S. and S. A. detachments.

As for the future, here, too, Professor Hoover is entirely discouraging. He sees no way for Germany to shake off Hitler save through complete economic collapse or an unsuccessful foreign war. Should economic collapse come—some of the Jewish leaders of the anti-German boycott mistakenly think it may come within a year—the difficulty is that there will be no party or group left in Germany to pick up the pieces. Hitler has 80,000 men in detention camps. He has destroyed all opposition. More than that, having complete control of every avenue of information and propaganda he can deceive the German people indefinitely—he is already doing so in his adroit misuse of the unemployment figures. Of course, if things go badly he has always the excuse to fall back upon that it was all the work of the international Jewry. He has, by the way, never dared to lay hands upon a single Jewish banking firm since he took office.

As for the international war, there seems more likelihood of that, in view of the Austrian complications. Professor Hoover has no doubt that Hitler is merely pretending to be pacific now in order to gain time for arming all Germany—boys from ten or twelve years up are now being trained as rapidly as possible. He reports that the Nazis have been deeply impressed by the success of the Japanese tactics in Manchuria. "If," writes Professor Hoover, "international public opinion can be so conciliated that France and her allies will not dare to try a 'preventive war,' then priceless time will have been gained. Whatever can be done by diplomacy and propaganda to lull international fright and avoid a preventive war must be done." Here is the greatest challenge to the League of Nations, to Europe, and to humanity. Hitler believes that the Allies will not venture on a preventive war unless they are willing to risk communism in Germany. Professor Hoover thinks he is correct, unless the Allies should be willing to garrison Germany indefinitely. But what is the alternative? Hitler at the head of a vastly more powerful, more dangerous, more militaristic Germany than was that of the Kaiser, a Germany bent on complete domination of Europe and, of course, on the restoration of the ante-World War status. Here is a problem to tax all of the little statesmanship the world possesses.

If there is any criticism to be made of this book it is that it is too short. Perhaps in future editions the author will add chapters dealing at greater length with the manhandling of every cultural aspect of German life and the suppression of the press. I should differ with him in the severity of his criticism of the alleged looseness of German youth under the republic. At least I should wish to know whether Professor Hoover knew the conditions in the Germany of the Kaiser and whether he contrasted those under the republic with those in other countries after the war. First and last, however, everyone who wishes a full knowledge of what Hitlerism is and how great is its menace to the peace of the world must possess this book. For every student it is an indispensable textbook.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

An Insulated Litterateur

The Journal of Gamaliel Bradford. Edited by Van Wyck Brooks. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.50.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD began his journal in 1883, when he was nineteen years old, and his first entry implied a hope that it would some day be published. Now Van Wyck Brooks has selected for publication approximately one-tenth of that journal, which grew to over a million words. Though the first entry is dated 1883, five-sixths of the book is devoted to the last decade and a half of Bradford's life. The journal has no value as an account of the outside world; it is all Bradford. Three topics recur to the exclusion of almost everything else: the author's health, his reading, and his work. Mr. Brooks, in a rather extraordinary preface, praises the journal as the revelation of the mind of an American author. It is certainly that—the revelation, though Brooks implies quite the contrary, of one more case of Brooksian frustration.

Bradford cannot be called the last of the New Englanders, for there are still a good many of them this side of the *Transcript's* obituary column; but he belonged to the tribe. He was descended, of course, from Governor Bradford; the erudite Sarah Ripley was his great-aunt; Emerson's friend, George P. Bradford, was his great-uncle. His father was, it is true, a banker, but the kind of banker who writes books on politics and has a season ticket for the symphony. The father recommended public affairs, but the son's heart was set on literature, and the father's money made a literary career possible.

To the spiritual isolation characteristic of all the literary New Englanders of Bradford's generation his illness added a very real physical isolation. He both needed and desired solitude, and he was happy only in his own home and in the Athenaeum. He lived almost entirely with his books, which he read and reread according to a marvelous schedule. For contemporary literature, except detective stories and French comedies, he had little regard, reading only what he felt obliged to, and that with abhorrence. There is no evidence in the journal of any acute interest in current events, and his reading, except in so far as it was dictated by the exigencies of his work, was wholly belletristic.

Yet Bradford wanted, above everything else, to be a poet and novelist, and it was to poetry and fiction that he devoted his early years. Even in 1921, after his success as a biographer was established, he fervently threw himself into the composition of a novel. But soon he was back at his biographies, and thereafter he made the best, though not without moments of rebellion, of the field in which he had triumphed. It was, obviously, the only field in which he could hope for success, the only field in which his isolation, his almost fantastic remoteness from the life of his age, was not a fatal handicap.

And even as a biographer Bradford could not escape the effects of his isolation. It is not fanciful, perhaps, to suppose

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that his whole method was the product of his singular mode of life. What he wanted to do—what he thought he did do—was to select the essential characteristic of the man he was studying. He disregarded chronology and thus the whole process of character development; he disregarded, in most of his studies, the social and economic conditions of the time; he dealt in only the most superficial fashion with intellectual currents. His whole conception of character was abstract and academic. Look, for example, at the neat formula for 'The Soul of Samuel Pepys": Pepys and his diary, his office, his money, his humanity, his intellect, his wife, God. Even the more substantial "Darwin" is static and lifeless. Of the shorter studies, some of the early American portraits are unpretentious and within limits shrewd; but the later work is almost uniformly shallow and mechanical, and its defects are emphasized by the expression, as in the preface to "Bare Souls," of the grandiose theories of psychography that Bradford developed, perhaps as compensation for his failure as a creative writer.

On all his weaknesses as a writer the journal sheds a cruel light. It is a pathetic book, with its record of constant ill health, of literary disappointments, of uneasy skepticism. It is at times, when the smug tory is revealed behind the mask of urbanity and tolerance, an irritating book. But it is never, despite Bradford's fine courage in the face of obstacles, a stirring book. Nor is it even a tragic book, for one does not feel, as one so often does in reading American journals and autobiographies, the waste of a great talent. What one really feels, harsh as it may seem to say it, is that Gamaliel Bradford, with his hours of reading and his brief moment of fame, got all he deserved. "Of what account are one's personal miseries," he asked on January 1, 1918, "especially when they are so trifling and balanced by so many comforts as mine, in comparison with the horrible state of the world at large?" And he answered his question, "I find that, for me at any rate, the only relief is to keep my thoughts so far as possible on the larger, higher, more permanent interests of life." It may be difficult to find the larger, higher, more permanent interests of life in the journal, but Gamaliel Bradford had his relief.

GRANVILLE HICKS

A Novel of Jewry

"Hear, Ye Sons." By Irving Fineman. Longmans, Green and Company. $2.

IT is rare, these days, to enter a Jewish home without finding it haunted, openly or in perplexed secrecy, by the questions: What is a Jew? Whence have we come, why are we here, and where shall we turn? For the contemporary Jew is suffering actually or vicariously his ancestral martyrdom; only, unlike his ancestors, he suffers without the comfort of knowing why he is peculiar and without the power derived from his traditional peculiar existence. The Nazis, in their effort to exterminate Jewry, have created millions of new Jews—freshly conscious of their Jewishness but sadly ignorant of what it is all about.

Without deliberate intent and therefore with more consummate effect, Mr. Fineman comes, in one sense, to their rescue. With only a hint and a possible regret for the future, he offers them the rich tapestry of their immediate past. He has patiently gathered together the infinite threads of his father's early years in a typical Polish Jewry, and enriched them with minute local research and loving study and meditation. And then in the fire of a poetic imagination he has wrought anew the age-old life of a Jew, born and reared in the ghetto; steeped in the discipline and delights of the Talmud; married in humble but exquisite splendor; trading, studying, and loving in the happy trinity of Jewish manhood; meeting the alien world in the terrible guise of the Russian conscript army; and at length escaping to the "freedom" of America.

"Hear, Ye Sons" does for the Jew what "The Good Earth" did for the Chinese or "As the Earth Turns" for the Yankee; and the reader may be safely left to judge the comparative worth of the three traditions and the creative gift of their exponents. Mr. Fineman's pictures of the betrothal and wedding of his hero and of his adventures in the Russian barracks are unforgettable; and his skill in rendering the atmosphere of a Talmudic school and the spirit, the meat, and the succulence of Jewish learning is, in English, a superb achievement.

The book, though frankly idyllic, never cloys, and it works upon the mature reader with the same magic as Martha Wolfenstein's "Idyls of the Gass" once—it may be hoped—worked upon his childhood. The author proves himself an artist in both the scope of his canvas and the color of his detail far beyond the promise of his prize-winning novel, "This Pure Young Man"; and as an artist he brings strength and beauty, not recipes and formulas, to his theme.

MARVIN LOWENTHAL

"Bertie"

King Edward VII. By E. F. Benson. Longmans, Green and Company. $3.

Edward VII. By H. E. Wortham. Great Lives Series. The Macmillan Company. 75 cents.

SIR SIDNEY LEE'S massive life of Edward VII is too long and detailed for the taste of the general reader, who will find Mr. Benson's brisk biography more to his liking. Mr. Wortham, in his little volume in the Great Lives series, relates, still more concisely, the salient events in King Edward's career and offers some interesting interpretations. He has dealt at greater length with the same subject in his book "The Delightful Profession," published two years ago.

Mr. Benson devotes three-quarters of his space to the life of King Edward during the long period of almost sixty years in which, as Prince of Wales, he stood on the steps of the throne. In view of the code of education and discipline to which he was subjected in childhood and youth it may seem surprising that "Bertie," as the Prince was called in the family circle, did not become either a prig or a mere libertine. His father's ill-conceived and long-continued attempt to make a scholar out of a boy to whom book learning was always repulsive was a complete failure from his point of view, though a more normal aristocratic English upbringing might, as Mr. Wortham suggests, have prevented the serious interests of King Edward's life from taking root and flourishing. Prince Albert and Victoria early conceived a nervous fear that the Prince of Wales would be morally ruined in youth by dissolute companions, after the manner of his disreputable great-uncle, George IV, and for years kept him in a state of virtual blockade as far as the companionship of boys of his own age was concerned. Even when he was sent to Oxford, and later to Cambridge, he was not permitted to reside in a college but was placed in a separate establishment under the control of a personal "governor." Nor did the death of his father, which occurred when the Prince was in his twenty-first year, put an end to the parental policy of repression, for the Queen unfortunately regarded it as her sacred duty to carry out her husband's every wish, and she was personally convinced that her heir was incapable of adult responsibilities. The Prince was extremely anxious to learn at first hand how the business of government was conducted, but Victoria would not permit it. It was in

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vain that several of her ministers, including Disraeli and Gladstone, urged her to take him into her confidence in high matters of state, though in the years of her widowed seclusion she allowed him to perform some of the ceremonial functions of the monarchy and to act as royal patron of enterprises of philanthropy and social welfare. It was not till he had passed fifty years that he was permitted to read the reports of Cabinet meetings which the prime minister regularly transmitted to the sovereign.

When he came to the throne King Edward was known to the British public principally as a sportsman and devotee of the turf, and as the leader of a social set which seemed distinctly fast when judged by Victorian standards. It is not strange that there were gloomy anticipations of the probable effects of his accession. The public knew little or nothing of his qualifications for the role of a constitutional king, and could not foresee the immense popularity which he was to achieve. It was ignorant of his interest in party politics and of the alert concern with which he had long watched every move on the chessboard of European diplomacy. Though long denied official documentary information regarding British foreign relations, he had been on intimate terms with his mother's prime ministers and foreign secretaries and with many British and foreign diplomats, with whom he engaged freely in conversation and correspondence on matters of foreign policy; and his numerous relatives on or near foreign thrones conveyed to him much of the talk and gossip of the courtly circles of Europe, and some of it was important.

Mr. Benson and Mr. Wortham pass rapidly over the events of King Edward's reign. They agree as to the importance of his visit to Paris in 1903 in paving the way for the *entente cordiale,* and they necessarily have something to say about the relations between the King and his nephew the Kaiser. Harmonious relations between the two men, in place of the mutual suspicion and dislike which actually existed, might have had some effect in tempering the growing rivalry between England and Germany, but it is doubtful whether the King's personality had any really decisive influence upon the course of international politics.

ROBERT LIVINGSTON SCHUYLER

O Talbot, My Talbot!

The Book of Talbot. By Violet Clifton. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.50.

THE principal dedication of this book is a perfect definition of its quality: "To God for Talbot." The supplementary dedications indicate the author's style: "To Nevill Coghill, the grain, the old, the wine of thankfulness. Without his teaching, without his sustaining charity—I had faltered"; "To Wallace Wood, lilt of wings; and violet and magnolia of my offering. Secret sweetness, and a form he showed me." After these, the first and last pages, anyone who dares read the book may sift from it the story of a man's life. The life is, despite the narrator's sentimentality, an interesting one. If only Talbot had told his own tale!

But Talbot did not, and very probably he would not have wished to. He was a man of action, a man to whom adventure was as necessary as breath, a man who traveled because he could not sit still. Talbot Clifton was, psychologically, one of those men in whom every element is exaggerated, a man overcharged. He had an intense curiosity about the world and was determined to see all of it that he could. He did not wish to do anything with the facts that he collected. A man of wealth and of landed possessions (he had vast estates in England and Scotland), he fulfilled his own destiny. But this destiny was not to write or to find any order in what he experienced. He married Violet in his middle years. He saw that she would follow him. And although during her years with him she had five children (where and how is not clear), she was always his companion. Violet is intensely romantic and religious. She worships her husband; she attempts to immortalize him. If she succeeds better in portraying her own eccentricities, it is not her fault.

The first chapters of Violet Clifton's book are made up in good part of Talbot's laconic, matter-of-fact notes on his travels. These are good. Before he was twenty he had been twice around the world. Then he went to Wyoming, to California (1894), to Mexico City. Later he traveled through Alaska and on into the Eskimo lands which are visited by very few white men. He loved horses and dogs, and activity. He did not care for the companionship of his own class. He was a close and accurate observer of the habits of birds and animals. He noted, unscientifically but interestingly, the customs of primitive people. Wherever he went he was at home. He ate any food, endured any weather, wore any kind of clothes. He fished and hunted, and was master of both crafts. His months within the Arctic Circle make good reading.

Clifton's first journey into Africa is told in a poem. Apparently his wife did not have much diary material on this journey, and, obviously, she is not a poet. Her husband, still not her husband, went next to Siberia. This journey is one of the most interesting. No one has seen these cold, isolated villages, these strange, lonely people of the Russian North, with a clearer eye. Talbot's very detachment from this unique world, his violent interest in his own sensations, give these chapters authenticity. "It was like going for a drive that would never end," he writes. But it did end. Talbot went next to Tibet and Burma, and then to South America.

Violet was waiting for him. She had never heard of him, but she was waiting. She was "the great-granddaughter of the eighth Duke of St. Albans, the daughter of the late W. Nelthorpe Beauclerk, British Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary in Peru, Equador, and Bolivia." Talbot found her lying beside a rushing torrent in the Andes. She had been traveling with her father, a melancholy scholar. She was no ordinary woman. Talbot's first gift to her was the Shakespeare with which he had always traveled. On the flyleaf he wrote, "To the only One in the Wanderings of a Wanderer."

They married and she followed him. During the World War they drove their cars in the service of their country. They went to Ireland and were involved in the revolutionary disturbances of 1921. They traveled to Bagdad, Persia, through the Arabian deserts. They saw the Sphinx. Violet was disappointed in the Sphinx because that Majesty had vegetable gardens at her feet. Talbot took his wife back to Africa with him and into the interior. They had no more than returned home when Talbot, nearing sixty, decided he must see Timbuktu. And off they went. On this journey Talbot died. The reader will be amazed at this, for he will have come to believe Talbot immortal—no man could endure so much and still be capable of dying. We learn no facts about the disease that killed the adventurer. The biographer has skilfully avoided facts throughout the book. We are told only of the tremendous religious bravery of the man in his last agonized days.

Such a biography is interesting for its materials. It holds the reader, despite its style, because of the variety of Talbot's adventures, because of the man's tremendous vitality. These adventures have no thread to tie them together; the man's life had no deep inner purpose. Yet the reader is drawn on to see what happens next. Talbot's real character is hidden in the mist of his wife's romantic idealization. Perhaps he did not have a real character. The "blurbs" compare this biography with Boswell's. That comparison is absurd. Boswell's small mind relished all details, incongruous though they might be.

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He gave us a Johnson who was often ridiculous even when he was greatest. Violet Clifton gives us a romantic hero, no very real man. But Talbot's activities are interesting, whoever may interpret them. He did, indeed, live like an Elizabethan, and he was most certainly as unselfconscious as any Elizabethan adventurer.

EDA LOU WALTON

None So Blind

Trial by Prejudice. By Arthur Garfield Hays. Covici-Friede. $2.50.

JUSTICE is portrayed as blindfolded to show that she is no respecter of persons. Her ears, unfortunately, are not stopped up; and so she hears the rumblings of the mob and is often deafened to the truth. Mr. Hays has illustrated this ancient experience in a very readable analysis of modern American instances. Justice in Alabama, California, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Washington is shown dominated by the mob, present visibly sometimes as at Scottsboro, sometimes, as in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, exercising influence indirectly. Here are excellent narratives of Centralia, Gastonia, the Herndon case, and the case of Leo Frank; detailed yet vivid histories of Scottsboro and Mooney; brief mention of other trials; and a delightful description of the courtroom methods of Clarence Darrow.

Mr. Hays's theme is stated simply and is readily acceptable: when men are involved emotionally they do not see straight. Perhaps he does too much apologizing for this failure, confessing as he does to a similar frailty in himself. It may be that he is right in believing that one can hardly expect jurors subject to the immediate influence of local feeling to surmount this weakness, although, as the book itself shows, this has sometimes happened. Nevertheless, we have the right to despise the surrender to prejudice of men placed in superior positions of power and responsibility—the Lowells, the Fullers, the Youngs, and the Rolphs—and the almost abject surrender to the will of the mob of countless judges of State supreme courts. Among the latter Langdon of California and Anderson of Alabama seem to be almost the only exceptions.

In his introduction Mr. Hays denies the claim of the radicals that economic differences lie at the root of most injustices. And it is true that prejudice against a defendant is not always due to the fact that he is a worker, and true also that others than workers are often the victims of prejudice. There are cases, as Mr. Hays points out, where the feeling against a defendant rests on difference of race or religion or on some other divergence from a characteristic of the herd not readily traceable to the class struggle alone. Nevertheless, even the anti-rich hysteria of the present and the anti-pacifist madness of the war period, both of which Mr. Hays instances in support of his argument, have their roots, in the last analysis, in deep-seated economic motives.

Regardless of considerations such as these, most readers will agree with the guiding belief of this book "that when emotions are aroused, judgments are likely to be wrong, that under such circumstances fair trials are practically impossible, that the 'will to believe' is the determining factor." And there can be no dissent from Mr. Hays's hope that were this more generally recognized in high places, "the appellate courts in review, and governors on pardon applications, would scrutinize the records not only with conscientious care but with searching doubt and with a grave sense of primary responsibility."

In his treatment of the cases discussed in support of his thesis Mr. Hays is, in the main, very successful. There are, to be sure, many statements in his chapter on the Scottsboro case with which this reviewer cannot agree, some of them inter-

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pretations of the evidence, some touching on the connection of the Communists with the case. And there are also a number of errors. The book bears evidence of over-hasty composition. One might expect even a typesetter to know that Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in 1927, not 1929 (nor on August 27). The correct name of the suspected gang is Morelli. Three, not all, of the justices of the Supreme Court were approached in that case. And in the Scottsboro case, to mention only one error, Haywood Patterson did not claim at Decatur that out of fear he had previously admitted having seen a raping; he denied he had ever given any such testimony, and as a matter of fact at Scottsboro he had already made the same denial.

The work suffers, too, from a lack of proportion in the treatment. More than half the book deals with two cases, and into less than one hundred pages are crowded the details of thirteen others. Nor are all these cases relevant to the general subject. Except for dramatic contrast, what is the Mitchell case doing in this company? Surely about that case there was no such one-sided feeling in New York as Mr. Hays implies.

This book can be heartily recommended, however, to the interest of those already familiar with the cases discussed, and to those who may desire to learn the essential facts of these *causes célèbres*. If for his eloquent presentation of the Mooney case alone, Mr. Hays is to be congratulated; for that case, while much commented upon, has not before been clearly presented in so readable a fashion.

OSMOND K. FRAENKEL

Drama

Justifiable Homicide

IT is a well-known fact that Earl Carroll believes in being generous with the public. On a previous occasion he reduced the price of his annual entertainment to a mere three dollars, and this year he determined to offer his patrons double value by combining under one roof the best (or shall we say most characteristic?) features of the musical revue with those of that other art form currently known as the mystery melodrama. It is all a little confusing, but three murders take place in the course of the evening and they are supposed to occur during that very performance of the annual "Vanities" which we are watching at the moment. I stifle the unworthy suspicion that the device may possibly be one for reducing the cost of production by devoting half the evening to relatively inexpensive conferences between officers of the law, but I am obliged to report that the whole does not jell very well despite the fact that it boasts five authors, two orchestrators, four directors, and a cast—Mr. Carroll's figures—of 110.

The principal lyric outburst of the evening, a ballad which proclaims "There never was an ocean, deep as my devotion," reaches the poetic heights usual in such productions, but the suspense of the dramatic situation is not intensified when a chorus of "the most beautiful girls in the world" chants an interlude entitled with stark simplicity "Who Committed the Murder?" Nor can it be denied that the intrigue itself is eventful and complicated rather than particularly perspicuous. Acid drops from the fly-loft, daggers are wielded during the blackouts, and, on one occasion, a pair of wicked scissors is thrust upward through the stage from below. But just exactly who killed whom, and, more especially, just what explanation is offered for the strange goings-on participated in by various persons not directly concerned in the crime, remain a mystery. The program does not bear the usual note requesting the spectator to refrain from revealing to his friends the solution of

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the problem. But it might very properly *dare* him to do so.

It would, nevertheless, be ungenerous not to credit Mr. Carroll with a real success in that department nearest his heart. Eleven years of experience with his offerings has convinced the public that humor is not his strong point and that the true explanation of his distressing improprieties is probably not that he likes them himself but that a somewhat bewildered study of current humor has led him to the conclusion that the genito-urinary tract is funny. Eleven years of experience have convinced us no less that all music, even of the popular variety, is very much alike to him. But he does take himself seriously as a connoisseur of female beauty, and he does succeed in forming an admirable collection of young and handsome ladies whose most secret charms he generously shares with the public. Moreover, he addresses himself to his self-appointed task of finding "the most beautiful girls in the world" with dogged and unwearying application. Other light-minded persons might be inclined to suppose with a wink that the selection of beauties, the examination of their "points" very much after the fashion of a judge in a dog show, was no labor at all. But Mr. Carroll is not light-minded—as witness the following pathetic note on the program: "When an opening-night audience first sees the lines of radiant, lovely femininity, they little realize the arduous labor involved in picking these girls. Several thousands usually answer the first chorus call when Mr. Carroll announces a show. It takes at least two months of wearying eliminations to arrive at the final selection. . . . The care is the same each year, for there are always fresh armies of girls springing up to replace the regulars. And their ultimate objective is to be able proudly to say, 'I'm an Earl Carroll girl.'"

The acting honors in "Murder at the Vanities" (New Amsterdam Theater) go to James Rennie, who gets a genuine suavity into the role of the head of the homicide bureau. The dishonors go to Billy House, a vaudeville comedian who repeats throughout the evening one witless, wearisome obscenity which belongs across the street in Mr. Minsky's temple.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Films

Time and Space

IN "Berkeley Square" (Gaiety) one may see again a distinguished and successful stage play transferred to the screen without any measurable loss of its original quality, taste, or appeal. Leslie Howard remains charmingly self-absorbed as the young American who suddenly finds himself plunged back into the English eighteenth century; Heather Angel, as the cousin whom he meets and loves in that soiled and disappointing time, plays with a forthright modern directness that is no more anachronistic than the Jazz Age nervosities of Margalo Gilmore; and the furnishings of the great London house are even more authentically Chippendale than one remembers them to have been on the stage. To those who persist in making derogatory comparisons between screen and stage the picture should prove highly disconcerting; for it must be remembered that Mr. Balderston's play, which promises to be fairly popular in its present form, was considered one of the most definitely highbrow offerings of both its London and New York seasons. But perhaps even stranger still is the fact that the spectator is actually less impressed with its being as good as the play than he is disappointed that, with its conception, it is not very much better. As everyone knows, "Berkeley Square" is based on an unfinished novel by Henry James, "The Sense of the Past," in which he apparently intended to

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trace out, with subtlest Jamesian analysis, the process by which a man of the present, enamored of the past, merges himself with that past only to discover that its moral values are cruder and hence less acceptable to him than those of his own time. It was, in other words, to be a typical James novel, with the chief emphasis on moral differences, and with the sensibility of the principal character as the greatest source of interest and excitement. From the notes that he left we gather that James did not intend to rely on mystical elements to manage his hero's immersion in the past; the sensibility would manage this for itself by slowly becoming its own dupe. In building his play, of course, Mr. Balderston could not make use of such a subjective method; he was forced to objectify in action what James would have "rendered" by analysis; and the result was that the conception, once objectified, became not only something much simpler but something quite different. It became an excuse for a genteel and very sentimental restatement of the romantic love theme, bolstered up with a few aphorisms out of Whitehead and Eddington to suggest that metaphysical implications were there if one cared to take them. Nothing was done to explain the hero's excessive preoccupation with the past, and this past was too conveniently opened up for him by an inexplicably opened property door. The climax was made to consist of a variation of a traditionally romantic situation—the separation of lovers, not in space, but in time. "There was never anything like this in the world," the hero whispered, on the eve of returning to his own century. And, theatrically at least, this climax, like other things in Mr. Balderston's play, was highly effective. But the full poetic possibilities of the conception were left unrealized because they could not be realized within the limitations of the naturalistic drama. What was required was a medium which would permit a focus on the hero's consciousness comparable to the focus which James's "point of view" permitted in the novel. The drama, that is to say, would have to be situated in the hero's mind from beginning to end. And we know, of course, from such pictures as "Caligari" and "The Last Hour," that the cinema is exactly such a medium, that the camera, in addition to setting the mechanical focus, can also serve to set the dramatic point of view. We know that once turned on the inner consciousness the camera has open before it the whole rich world of the fantasy and the imagination, the old lost world of poetry, which the naturalistic drama has denied for the world of logic and verisimilitude. But Frank Lloyd has preferred to show that he can reconstruct Georgian coffee-houses as he could reconstruct Edwardian sitting-rooms in "Cavalcade." He has preferred conforming to the restrictions of another medium to enjoying the freedom of his own.

What makes Dreyer's "Passion of Joan of Arc" (Little Carnegie) still an exciting cinema experience, on the other hand, is the directorial enterprise which dared recreate one of the great European stories in terms of the new art. The picture belongs to the last days of the silent era; it was the culmination of the close-up school of direction, the last and most serious attempt to reduce the complex cinema art to the narrowly stylized art of pantomime. Against a blank white background Dreyer casts his heads of priests, soldiers, inquisitors, and by an abstraction of everything but the facial expressions registered by each of them in the course of the situation, seeks to communicate something purer and more essential than could be communicated by words or action. One of the objections to such a method, of course, is that too much depends on the art and physical endowment of the actors; and in Dreyer's film it is true that one does not know where to draw the line between the director's pictorial genius and the magnificently plastic beauty of Mlle Falconetti. But whatever may be the objections, the picture must be considered one of the minor masterpieces of the screen.

WILLIAM TROY

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Contributors to This Issue

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